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INTRODUCTION
TO
GALSWORTHY'S PLAYS.

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INTRODUCTION
TO
GALSWORTHY'S PLAYS.

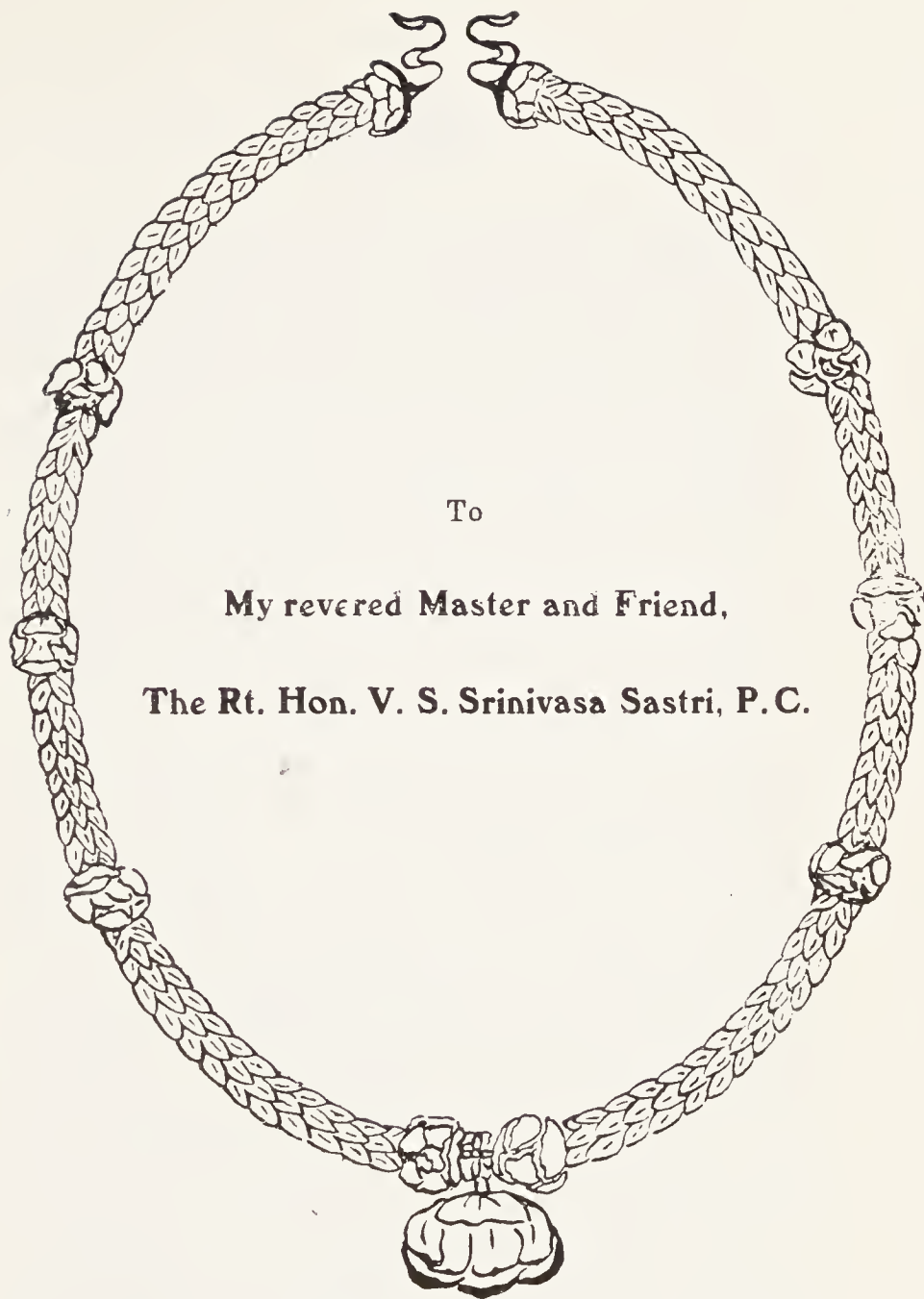
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1925

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To

My revered Master and Friend,

The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C.

PREFACE

THIS little book is written mainly for those bel-
letrists among my compatriots who, having heard of
that El Dorado, the Modern European Drama, have
not yet visited it, either because they have not had
the leisure, or because, having lighted on precious ore
in other lands of gold—poetry, fiction, or essay—are
reluctant to leave them, unexhausted, for new realms.
It attempts to introduce Indian lovers of English
literature, ~~to whom~~, the contemporary drama of the
West being still unbroken ground, wish to be bec-
koned on to some definite landmark by a brother-
spirit. In this chartless region, the first chapter
plants only a few finger-posts; the second takes a
bird's-eye view of English drama; the third makes a
tentative survey of the more salient features of Gal-
sworthy's plays. In the five chapters that follow, I
have interpreted, as best I might, seventeen of them,
down to the one which appeared last year; in the
study of each I have pointed out the dominant idea,
and recounted the story so as to bring out the inward-
ness of characters, reveal touches of insight, and
indicate scenes of beauty or power, fusing thereby
story with criticism. Though I have classified the
plays—and I hope in an intelligible order—on the
basis of governing ideas and themes, I am not quite
sure whether I have succeeded, or for the matter of
that, any one could succeed, more than Polonius
did when he classified the plays of his youth as

"tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited." The last chapter aims at coming to grips with some of the less obvious features of Galsworthian drama.

Though mainly for the book-lover, it is written partly for the use of B. A. students of the Bombay University, who have to study three plays—*Joy*, *The Silver Box*, and *Strife*—for their examinations in the two coming academic years. These, therefore, I have treated more fully than others,—and one of them at least (*The Silver Box*), more fully than I should have liked, were it not 'in the bond'. To be of service to the students also, the book had to issue betimes, and be rushed both in the manuscript and in the printing stage. This has entailed a certain perfunctoriness of treatment in the first and last chapter, of the temerity of which I am but painfully conscious. The absence of a more thorough study of the characteristics of Modern Drama in general, and of Galsworthian in particular, than has been possible in this book, owing to the exigencies of time and space though it might be regarded by the student as a welcome riddance, will be regretted by the general reader, whose indulgence I can only crave. For the same reason, I have not tackled the one-act plays. But I can claim for the book one little merit, if merit it be, that if it is not the first monograph on Galsworthy—Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith (Mrs.—I forget the husband's name) having anticipated me in a manner that I could never hope to imitate—it is the first handbook to his plays. I have read her couple of chapters

on Galsworthy's earlier plays, and the profit I have derived therefrom is not the less for the vigorous dissidences some of her suggestive criticisms have provoked from me. Another book that I have consulted is T. H. Dickinson's *Contemporary Drama of England* (John Murray), which I found of great use in condensing my ideas of modern English playwrights who are dealt with in the second chapter.

For the rest, barring a quotation from Ludvig Lewisohn's Prefaces to Hauptmann's Plays, and another from André Chevrillon's brilliant little essay on Galsworthy's novels, this book embodies, as it should, my own reflections on the plays, separately and collectively. In hiving them here, I am only inspired by that of Love literature which would glow by kindling itself in others—the love of the great artist under study being only a special manifestation. I dare say therefore, that it would please me most if this book might be read in connection with the six volumes of Galsworthy's plays published by Duckworth.

It is a great pleasure for me to acknowledge my grateful thanks to the manager of the Aryabhushan Press, Poona, who has spared no pains in printing this book with despatch and care.

June 1925.

R. SADASIVA AIYAR.

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CHAPTER I.

Ibsen and the Modern Drama.

I The spirit of modern literature—Henrik Ibsen—The “Naturalistic” Movement—The rejection of old dramatic devices—The rejection of sudden overwhelming catastrophe—Elizabethan *vs.* modern drama—Psychology and symbolism—Affinities—Positive features: elaborate stage direction, the unities of time and place,—The retrospective method. II Currents other than naturalistic.

I

IT is a far cry from Shakespeare and his comrades of the “Mermaid” to Ibsen and the moderns. While literary ideals that are imperishable and universal remain constant, standards of taste, canons of technique, conventions of material and *milieu* have changed by a whole heaven. The best modern literature has during the last hundred years gained in philosophic strength, in vigorous metabolism of scientific ideas, and in a defiant freedom of thought re-examining and focussing afresh old ideas in ethics, politics and social ordering. Through its entire range rings the clarion-call of social justice. Intensely ethical in its aim, modern literature issues its fiat not from a conscience fluttering in rags of the Levite and mouldering in sickly custom, but from a living soul, fresh and strong.

In tune with the spirit of this change in literature is the change in modern drama. The pioneer of the 19th century dramatic revival in Europe was the Norwegian dramatist, Ibsen. Intellectually and

morally one of the most energising of dramatists, one of those writers of power who free, arouse and dilate our minds, taking us to fresh view-points, rousing in us a divine discontent of mind and heart, Ibsen yearned, to borrow the words of Prof. Dowden, "to awaken those who slumber" on the easy pillow of traditional opinion and conventional morals, to startle them from the false dream of custom, and, if need be, to combat, to censure, to satirize." The life founded on a lie and the life founded on truth, as exemplified by a *Peer Gynt* and a *Brand*; the spiritual tragedy of divided wills, and of partial personalities; the spiritual comedy of souls triumphing over "witch-suggestions" in their hearts, as illustrated by the tragic end of *Rebecca West*, and of souls attaining unity and purpose in life; the conflict between the ideals of higher and lower freedom, such as goes on in the mind of *Ellida*, "the Lady from the Sea"; a life of invincible faith in oneself studied in contrast with one of faithlessness and doubt, as in *Pretenders*; the examination of idealism, true, false, and one-sided, in private and public life; the hereditary persistence of evil tracked to its relentless consequences as in *Ghosts*;—these form the motifs of Ibsen's plays. Most profoundly psychological of dramatists, Ibsen started in moral, social, and literary ideals, currents so dynamic that they vibrated through the whole of Europe. We may say without exaggeration that the methods of modern dramaturgy are mostly of Ibsen's creation, and that even those who claim to have come least under his direct influence are guided by them not the less thoroughly because the imitation is unconscious.

The movement of modern drama is as a whole, with marked exceptions, towards 'naturalism.' Hence

for any adequate understanding of a modern play the character of the naturalistic movement must be grasped. Let us recall the atmosphere in which the movement began. In Europe, the years about 1880 saw the throes of great awakenings, heard the reveille of new ideas in the world of science, philosophy and letters. Tolstoy in Russia, Goncourt in France, Ibsen in Norway, Bjornson in Denmark, and Strindberg in Sweden, had launched new ideals, nay, cradled new *genres* in literary art. Artificial conventions removed from the stuff of life, were beginning to sicken literary minds. Zola and Goncourt in France had declared that the pith and marrow of art lay "in the modern, in the sensation, the intuition of the contemporary, of this spectacle of life with which one rubs elbows." German men of letters too imbibed the new spirit, the foremost of them in the sphere of drama being Gerhart Hauptmann.

The realistic drama bids farewell to ghosts and fairies, Ariel and Puck; to enchanted islands and forests of Arden; to incredible confusions of identity, disguises, miraculous meetings and reconciliations, with which the student of the older schools of drama, romantic, Jonsonian, Congrevian, and Molieresque, is familiar. That truth, bare and bald, is stranger than the wildest fiction is the fundamental creed of realism. Get beneath the froth and ferment on the surface of life to its deepest issues and you will be face to face with its awe-inspiring and mysterious revelations of comedy and tragedy enacted every moment around us, with the ceaseless ebb and flow of love, joy, hope, sorrow, agony, despair. The drab texture of life, looked at intently, reveals threads of fairy sheen; and the vision of a seeing artist can

penetrate through the gray mists to a world ribbed with the hues of the rainbow.

Literature must be an exact rendering of the actual. True ; but if it should mean ruthlessly eschewing intentional choice of both theme and style,—of style because it presupposes the artist's own selection and omission of details and subtle manipulation of events, to suggest his own vision and his own interpretation ; if it should mean merely the transcription of life with its apparent chaos and purposelessness, a play would become indistinguishable from a story told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing. Naturalism does not imply the sacrifice of selection and concentration, of personal vision and interpretation, which are the life-breath and the very definition of literature. But it does mean the reduction of factitious devices to the irreducible minimum. In a modern realistic play there is no manœuvring of complication, climax, and denouement. "There could be no artistic beginning, for life comes shadowy from life ; there could be no artistic ending, for the play of life only ends in eternity." It might be objected that modern plays have "a conclusion in which nothing is concluded." Well, the paradox with them is that they do conclude without concluding, leaving us satisfied and yet craving for more, our hearts touched with the *rerum lachrymæ* and our imagination busy shadowing out the future.

The characters in a modern play glide in and out of the stage with the naturalness of humdrum life. We do not feel the hidden hand of the artist heightening or lowering the incidence of emotion on our hearts. There is no superior articulateness on the part

of the characters, no declamation and rhetoric—the plet sin of neo-classical drama—except such as fall on our ears in daily life. Hauptmann and Galsworthy, Granville Barker and Arnold Bennett achieve the highest exactitude in the reproduction of spoken language. Those who have read Hauptmann in the original German say that he reproduces with astonishing accuracy minute dialectic variation ; but in the translations we see how he reveals delicate shades of character through fine differences of tone, accent and gesture. Long monologue-like speeches, the device of ‘ letters ’ like that which Sir Toby and Maria employ to bait Malvolio, or that other which Portia receives, the lightly motivised confession, sudden and incredible change of heart in one of the persons of the drama (like that of Duke Frederick and Oliver in *As you like it*, and of Proteus in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*), soliloquies and asides—indeed, all the tricks and formulas of “ a well-made play ” by means of which the elder dramatists naively conveyed information to the audience or unravelled the tangled skein have now fallen into desuetude.

The life of a man is normally a web of trifles light as air, a series of nameless, unremembered acts. Faint inner stirrings, fugitive fancies and fleeting suggestions gain cumulative strength through years and ossify into character. At certain junctures of life, a man’s character seems to jump out of and stand behind him, an embodied fate holding him as it were in its grip. Our wills seem to acquire an independent life and act as an extraneous power. It is this profound truth that George Eliot illustrates in the fate of Tito Melema. The individual and society are under the momentum of the past, so that their

character is more than half their destiny. Pure accidents absolutely independent of character, as compared with those that are dependent, are far too few. But accidents of the latter type, like Sankuntala losing her ring or Desdemona her handkerchief, are but too common in the elder dramatists. Beaumont and Fletcher fractioned up life and arbitrarily re-combined the fragments with improbable surprises in galore and incredible *volte face* of character, with a view to hold the interest of the audience in breathless suspense. As a critic remarks: "the material of life was dissected into mere shreds, and these re-woven into patterns as little akin to reality as the flowers and birds of a Persian rug." The modern drama on the other hand, by virtue of its austere and resolute fidelity to life, scorns this artificial method. The older type of tragedy generally ends in a crashing ruin of the hero along with some of the other characters connected with him. The forces of actual life however, rarely gather head into such opposed camps and fight a pitched battle to crush a man outright or send him forth a laurelled victor with the prize of the fair one in his arms. In life, the conflict of will with will, the passionate crises of human existence are but seldom concentrated into a brief space of time or culminate in a highly salient situation; these generally steal upon us with soft paws and noiseless steps and are recognized as crises only in the retrospect of calmer years; they do not often cast their shadows before. Life goes on in a perpetual grind—a never-ending chain of transitions. The hostile environment gradually gains on a man as the tireless surf on a bluff, rocky headland through ages of slow erosion. Shakespeare illustrates this great truth of character and life in Macbeth and Hamlet,

as in *Othello* he illustrates the precipitant tumble of a man into sudden moral cataclysm. But even in the latter case, Shakespeare shows the final destruction of the hero as but the finishing stroke of a long silent, and agonized struggle between love and jealousy in his heart. To quote the words of Mr. Ludvig Lewisohn: "The constant and bitter conflict in the world does not arise from pointed notions of honour and duty held at some rare and climacteric moment, but from the far more tragic grinding of a hostile environment upon man or of the imprisonment of alien souls in the cage of some social bondage."* The student of Hauptmann remembers how, in *Michael Kramer*, the despair of ever weaning his reprobate son from crime gnaws Michael's heart like a canker-worm night and day. In contemplating such a life we realize with Wordsworth how

"Suffering is permanent, obscure, dark,
And shares the nature of infinity."

Similarly, in Galsworthy's *Fugitive*, Clare Dedmond's decision to sheer off from her husband has been preceded by trial and heart-weariness. In *A Family Man*, long years of bitter sufferance precede the revolt of Builder's family against him.

This leads us to another difference between Elizabethan and modern tragedy. The Elizabethan tragedy was a tragedy of blood, and in the hands of some practitioners like Webster and Tourneur, in spite of the many passages of exquisite poetry and moving pathos, a tragedy of lust and horror also. Even Shakespeare, after all a child of his age, could not altogether transcend its traditions and refine the

* Introduction to Hauptmann's plays, Vol. I

Senecan type out of itself. The utmost that his genius could achieve was to invest the tragedy of blood with profound psychological interest, take the conflict as much into the inner world as possible, and make it revelatory of character—not a mean achievement. But even so, his tragedies bear the mark of their age. Let us take, for instance, *Hamlet*. The seven murders and the one suicide in it appear so casual and are so subordinated to the dominating interest of character that we do not feel their presence much. But there they are all the same. Modern tragedy on the other hand has passed from the objective to the subjective, from the bold handling of external event to the subtle materializing of inward significance, the conflict passing from the world of action into that of the conscious or subconscious mind. Ibsen's poetic tragedies, *Peer Gynt* and *Brand*, are the greatest illustrations of the modern type. They reach the severest minimum in the matter of deaths and tortures. This shifting of interest to the realm of mind is responsible for the growth of the purely literary play (as distinguished from the acting play) in which a playwright like Maeterlinck, discounting the equation of audience, can dispense with situation and concentrate on pure symbolism.

On the other side of the count we must admit as a drawback of modern drama that, in evolving its intimate psychology, it has lost much of that general apprehension of the power and mystery of life which overwhelmingly impressed men viewing life from a wider stand-point and begot the grandeur of their rhythm. Before we dismiss Greek drama as simple sensationalism, dismiss Marlowe and Webster, Racine and Calderon as exponents of primitive melodrama,

we must take into account the stage-conventions of their time, the nature of their own and their audiences' opinions, and the degree of their credulity. Then alone can we appreciate the older schools of drama in their proper perspective, and realize how they expressed through their primitive formulas the universal in human nature. It is well to note that though dramatic technique has changed infinitely for the better, the principles governing the expression of the universal remain constant both in tragedy and comedy. Tragedy now as ever finds its bases in conflict, character, and fate, (albeit called differently as 'heredity' and 'chance') and comedy in type-characters variously individualized, automatism (that is, more or less routine action), and the conflict of ideas. Many [modern plays are, however, hard to label either as pure comedies or as pure tragedies. Galsworthy's *A Family Man*, *The Pigeon*,¹ *A Bit O' Love* and *The Silver Box*, for instance, are neither the one nor the other absolutely. Apart from their verisimilitude, modern realistic comedies are distinguished from Elizabethan romantic comedies in that they do not, like the latter, treat love romantically and sentimentally but analytically as a "complex". The comedy of humours and manners anticipates modern comedy only in so far as both are realistic, but in every other respect they fall into different categories.

We scan the lineaments and read the very heart of European society during the last half century, a society highly nervous and individualistic, and fermenting with the conflict of ideas, in these modern plays. Ibsen takes us to the life of the bleak fjörds of Norway, Hauptmann introduces us to German households and German society as privileged visitors

and auditors. Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, Granville Barker, G. B. Shaw, H. H. Davies, Maselield, J. M. Barrie, Lady Gregory, J. M. Synge, and a host of others put us in possession of the key to the proud and jealously guarded British home and enable us to see the very seams in the British character. Like Dickens and Browning, Ibsen had such devouring eyes that he could catch at a glance and etch in his memory trifling minutiae connected with a house, a person, or a landscape. He could retain impressions of bric-à-bracs and furniture, the pictures on the walls, the colour of the curtains, the appearance and expression of the inmates, the style of their several dresses and their entire *tout ensemble*, long after he saw them. In the keenness of this faculty, Hauptmann and G. B. Shaw are no whit inferior to their master. In sheer power of retaining such impressions Galsworthy is not quite their equal, though he has an extraordinary power of expressing character and inner movements by delicate, external details.

Students of modern plays need not therefore be surprised at the wonderfully vivid, full, and faithful stage-directions that have the effect of conjuring up in our minds the setting and atmosphere. Let us, for example, take the stage-direction which opens Hauptmann's *Colleague Crampton*, the play being named after its hero, a professor of painting. We are introduced to the high-ceilinged room with the Gothic tables under the two large windows, covered with rolls of paper, brushes, water-colour boxes, palettes, malsticks, in picturesque disorder, and adorned with bronzes. We see the *Drunken Faun* of Herculaneum and the *Silenus* of Pompeii mounted on

each of them ; while the anatomical study, a human skeleton, surmounted with a big artist's hat perched at an audacious angle, glares at us from before the pillar. Nor does the visitor fail to see the rear wall decorated with goblin tapestry which falls below a Persian divan, and the tiger-skin before it with the Gothic *prie dieu* supporting a great Bible in the old pig-skin binding. The whole *mis-en-scène* is semi-Gothic, semi-oriental, revealing the special turn of Crampton's art-genius, for there is in it an Ariel-touch of fantastic invention as there was in Correggio and Leonardo ; as witness to which one has but to cast one's eyes on the *Dance of the Maenads* traced in charcoal on the paste-board frieze on the left wall, and other weird pictures on the easels, one of which represents Mephistopheles and the student from *Faust*. And there are, besides, the Gothic cupboard, the Gothic chairs, and the Gothic chest, and the richly carpeted floor, to arrest us with the Gothic note, while the artist mind broods over the whole scene, speaking to us from the many oil-paintings, studies and art-objects including the superb *Apollo Belvedere*. Such a stage-direction as this, while visualizing the external aspect of a studio, achieves something higher ; it introduces us to the ideal picture-gallery of the artist's own mind, giving us a revelation of his visions and aspirations.

To come to other positive features of modern technique. The Ibsenian school, because of its concentration, tends to preserve like the Greek and Neo-Classical drama the unities of time and place. Within each act they are never violated. As illustration of absolute fidelity to these pseudo-Aristotelian

unities we may cite Galworthy's *Jay*, Hauptmann's *Reconciliation*, Ibsen's *Ghosts*, *Pillars of Society* and *Hedda Goller*. In *John Gabriel Borkman*, stage-time almost corresponds with actual time. The unity of time, however, is not so often kept as the unity of place. The elaborate methods of stage-representation now in vogue do not permit of frequent changes of scene. The observance of the unities makes for a certain compactness and condensation inseparable from modern conception of structure and effect, and are made possible by the character of modern themes.

The same concentration of method accounts for modern plays always confining their action, like *The Tempest*, to the closing portions of the story. Hence the three-act play. As the play develops it harks back, like *Agamemnon* or *Oedipus*, to antecedent circumstances, lifting off veil after veil from the past. Ibsen, more than any other dramatist, is a master in producing this retrospective effect. *Rosmersholm*, *Wild Duck*, and *Ghosts* occur to our minds. As *Rosmersholm* advances it throws one gleam after another on the true nature of Rebecca until the extent of her machinations and her all-devouring passion are fully revealed. In dramas of this type the exposition has necessarily to dilate and continue through the best part. Even apart from this, all modern plays extend the rising action to the narrowest possible limits.

II

Realism is the main, but not the sole current in modern drama. There is, for example, Maurice Maeterlinck throwing down the gauntlet to the purely realistic schools. He is a mystic who seeks in his plays, as in his lyrics and philosophy, to indicate

the mystery that lies beneath the surface of life. His characters—Arthurian knights, orphan princesses, aged guardians of desolate castles—are shadowy forms untrammelled by time and space. The action in his plays is no less shadowy. Himself a seer like W. B. Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore, his plays are instinct with a high moral beauty, informed with a profound spiritual significance. The *Blue Bird*, like Galsworthy's *Little Dream*, is a play of fairy symbolism, with its dream of souls transfigured after death and waiting for the *vita nuova*. Some of Hauptmann's later plays, like *Gabriel Schilling's Flight*, though realistic, are lit up with a mystic perception of the real behind the unreal, of the immortal behind the mortal. The Russian Chekhov and the Spanish Benavente derive their power from their recognition of the boundless potentialities of the human spirit. Their plays reveal the intimate relation between the visible gift of life and the invisible treasure of the spirit, their whole movement depending on subjective events.

To mention other forms. There are the new historic plays like Drinkwater's *Mary Stuart*, *Abraham Lincoln*, and *Cromwell*; and Masefield's *Pompey the Great*. In *St. Joan*, *Caesar* and *Cleopatra*, *The Man of Destiny*, G. B. Shaw strips Joan of Arc, Caesar and Napoleon of the glamour of myth and legend and exhibits them as he would conceive them to have been, thus giving us a personal interpretation of historical characters. Other plays of Shaw with their fanciful plots evince kinship with the romantic comedy. Romance asserts itself again in the plays of W. B. Yeats and Lord Dunsany, the scenes of the latter being laid in a no-man's land of imagination. In

Stephen Phillips' *Herod*, and *The Sin of David* there is a return to Biblical themes and a harking back to the Greek manner. They are in verse like Masefield's *King's Daughter* and several of Drinkwater's plays. Phillips and Drinkwater take us to Homer, the one in *X=O* and the other in *Ulysses*. Plays like Hauptmann's *Griselda* represent old legends with a new psychology. The air is so full of adventure both in form and spirit that we could only adumbrate the varieties of dramatic experiment in our time.

CHAPTER II.

A Chapter of Names.

Sir W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan—H. A. Jones.—
Sir A. W. Pinero—Oscar Wilde—Ibsenian influences in
England—G. B. Shaw—Granville Barker—H. H. Davies—
John Galsworthy—Arnold Bennett—John Masefield—
Sir J. M. Barrie—A galaxy.

THE origin of contemporary drama in England is antecedent to Ibsenian influences, the earliest prominent writer of social and domestic plays in the 19th century being Thomas W. Robertson (1829–1871). All delicate pieces of fancy satirizing the new commercial classes, his plays—*Caste*, *M. P.*, *Home*, *Dreams*, etc.—are tinged with a tender romance.

With Robertson's disciple in technique, Sir W. S. Gilbert (1836–1911) we come to a definite landmark. A versatile genius handling comedies, melodramas, social dramas, verse tragedies, absurdities, sometimes writing under his own name, sometimes under the *nom de guerre*, F. C. Tomline, his richest vein lay in musical comedy—Gilbert's sphere *par excellence*. His operas are symmetrically constructed and reveal their author's marvellous verbal resource. Even in his most fantastic works there is a severe realism: with a logician's intellect he sees how life, so refractory to human calculations, rebels against all formulas. He never tires of travestying romantic love, the theatre, doctors, aesthetes, formulas of art, Irishmen, and soldiers. His satire rings with silvery

laughter, and his plays are pervaded by a delicate and graceful fancy wedded to the magic of words. *The Mikado* and *Patience*: or *Bunthorne's Bride*! are his perfect pieces. Like Beaumont and Fletcher the name of Gilbert is linked inseparably with that of Sir Arthur Sullivan, their best work, the Savoy operas, having emerged from their joint hands.

Two other names are always mentioned together in the dramatic history of the last thirty years, H. A. Jones and A. W. Pinero, not because they are kindred spirits, but because they suggest an obvious contrast like Dickens and Thackeray. They were the most distinguished names in the drama of the eighties. A social reformer to the backbone, H. A. Jones regarded the theatre as the most potent instrument of social reform just as G. B. Shaw, succeeding him, has utilized his plays to rouse thought on the most fundamental ideas of society. Jones does not seek to examine absolute values nor analyse threadbare the root-notions of society, social conformity being with him a postulate. Most of his plays have a large and carefully worked out social background before which the action seems to shrink in importance. The plots are melodramatic and the character embodies a point of view. Jones' plays are a faithful portrait gallery of the English middle class of his time, and the characters from it are shown to be badly spotted with sin under their cloak of respectability. We see his genius at its best in *The Masqueraders*. His twenty-five plays are a pioneering event in modern English drama.

In England the first practitioner of new technical methods was Sir Arthur Pinero. A good technician,

he has shown himself at home in more varieties of dramatic form than any other English dramatist. Farce and fantasy, comedy and tragedy, are equally his domain. Possessed of a keen eye for the incongruity between logic and life, he found his *forte* in farce. His *Magistrate* is based upon the device of a woman understating her age only to find that perverse circumstance brings sharply before her, every now and then, her growing son to mock her statement. *The Schoolmistress* and *Dandy Dick* deightfully caricature traits of character in themselves true and human. But the play that Pinero launched as a sensation in his time was *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, in which he moots the problem as to whether a marriage between a courtesan and a good man can be a success—the latter knowing her past and resolved to rescue her from it. Paula, the second Mrs. Tanqueray, sensitive, loving, and cross-grained, recoiling from the distant behaviour of respectable people, defeated in her efforts to gain the heart of her step-daughter, Ellean, and repulsed by her freezing coldness, commits suicide. That such a woman can never wholly transcend her past is Pinero's answer to the problem. His men and women are flesh and blood, though his dialogues are a touch too literary for actual speech. He was the first playwright in England to come under Ibsenian influences.

In the nineties the most popular dramatist was Oscar Wilde (1856-1900), the Beau Brummell of his generation, a rather flashy genius carrying more sails than ballast. A skilled craftsman, writing with easy command of brilliant and epigrammatic style, he could couch floating ideas in crisp and telling manner. This, coupled with a certain knowing

air and "an easy attitude on other men's thoughts", makes him a fascination for the young. He could anticipate and hit off the ideas of his fellows in enviably chiselled and pointed language that never failed to give him the look of 'a very clever boy.' His plots are hopelessly hackneyed and his characters are lay figures. But in his *The importance of being earnest*, a farce mirroring a frivolous society, Oscar Wilde is seen at his best, the repartees of refined intelligences being here quite in place. It became easy in the nineties to write a comedy of manners, for the author had only to glance delicately at forbidden topics.

It was at this time that the English dramatic world came under the powerful spell of Ibsen. First introduced into England by Edmund Gosse in 1873 through an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, Ibsen became for thirty years a "storm-centre in English theatrical affairs." While his influence fortified the moral and psychological stamina of English drama, with inferior writers it achieved a result not perhaps all to the good, for it gave them only too keen an incentive to the study of sex-psychology and the writing of sex-plays.

This brings us to Ibsen's stoutest champion in England, G. B. Shaw, perhaps the most tremendous intellectual force of our days—a disciple worthy of the master. He subjects every thing in the world of ideas to the relentless and impartial examination of a steady achromatic personal judgment, severe and undeluded. Let it be mentioned at once that the first and finest article in Shaw's creed, cleared of moss and froth, is his faith in the sanctity of the human will, "in the divine capacity for creation and choice rising higher

than environment and doom." There is something higher and deeper in man than Reason—the Life Force, imperiously urging him to live, to suffer and to create, a force that has something Divine and supernatural in its quality, and speaks with authority and not as the scribes, though Shaw would not mention or perhaps even recognize its divine nature in so many words. He loves perversely to hide his intense humanitarianism and compassion for animals under a hard, cold and scientific manner, and he outdoes the scientist in his hatred of sentimentality.

In his writings Shaw is first and foremost a critic—a critic in two fields: the one, music, literature, painting, drama; the other, religion, politics and morality. In the latter field, with the ardent vehemence of a knight-errant he wages war against accepted canons of conduct and belief. In his plays we move in a high plane of ideas shown in clash and conflict, among characters who are personified points of view. His most convincing characters are marked by a certain original and often startling freshness of vision like that of the poet, Marchbanks, in *Candida* or a happy uncommon common sense like that of *Candida* herself, or a certain bracing vigour of critical judgment and decided individuality like that of the Clandons in *You never can tell*, or of Margaret Knox in *Fanny's First Play*.

Though not primarily a great creator of character, he has given us many delightful characters like Lady Waynefleet in *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*. The sovereign beauty of this character cannot be better stated than by saying that it was specially created for Ellen Terry. Shaw's characters, because each has something to say, talk in language full-blooded and

incisive, hitting off an idea sharply as a flash of lightning cuts through a sheet of silk. The plays are fireworks of brilliant talk and subtle analysis.

They have a kinship with romantic plays in that their plots are fancifully arranged; with the comedy of manners in that they sparkle with graceful wit; with realistic plays, in that the characters, fresh from the brine of Life, contribute, even the most common-place of them, towards the inner significance and social suggestiveness of the plays in which they occur. In several of them, as we have pointed out in the first chapter, Shaw loves to strip off the nimbus of glory that has gathered round great historical heroes and disclose them to us in their real magnitudes. Furthermore, almost all his plays have at least one scene of sheer magic and power, and these scenes, taken together, put their author in the front rank of world-dramatists.

A brother-spirit of Shaw is Granville Barker (1877-), an exquisite artist marked by strong moral earnestness. From the point of view of structure his plays are marvels of craftsmanship. Sinewy with the play of ideas like Shaw's, they are marked by the closest naturalism. The *Madras House* and *The Marrying of Anne Leete* are 'a mental epitome' of modern society, illuminating for us its very soul. Barker's artistry and thought remind us of H. H. Davies' scholarly mind and insight into social psychology, and of Galsworthy, the hero of this book. In this same group we must consider Arnold Bennett with his minute penetration into the best and worst of human nature, and a special excellence in amusing comedy strongly flavoured with satire. In more serious drama, among those who have raised the spi-

ritual significance of tragedy, comes John Masefield, best known by his *Tragedy of Nan*. In the realm of fantasy Sir J. M. Barrie is *facile princeps*. He raises no banner of revolt against social conventions. He writes his plays not so much to be read as to be acted, (contrast Shaw). They are homes of sentiment and laughter. Max Beerbohm, than whom there is no better authority in stage matters, calls Barrie's *Admirable Crichton* "the best thing that has happened in my time to the stage."

The minor luminaries in modern English drama are far too many to be characterised. The competent craftsmen are so many that their names form a long bead-roll: J. M. Synge, Lady Gregory, Joseph Conrad, Stephen Phillips, Alfred Sutro, Somerset Maugham, A. A. Milne, Harold Brighouse, Lord Houghton, Lord Dunsany, J. J. Bell, Hankin, and many others, each having some striking grace, some charming touch. The modern dramatic world is electric with activity and big with glorious promise.

CHAPTER III.

Galsworthian Drama.

Life--An idealist with a purpose--Not less an artist--
Poised judgment--Studies in the Forsyte world--English
family life--Economy of words and suggestive power--
Dialogues--Scenes--Curtain.

THE facts of Galsworthy's life are soon told, for, a sensitive soul shrinking from vulgar gaze, he has sedulously screened them, like Swift and Thackeray, from the well-intentioned curiosity of biographers. Born in 1867 at Combe in Surrey, educated at Harrow and Oxford, he was called to the bar in 1890, but gave up practice ere long. To his having commenced life as a barrister is undoubtedly due the vivid studies of lawyers in his plays. Possessed by a passion for travel, he has visited in the course of his wanderings Russia and all the far-flung lands of the British Empire. That a sailor whom he met and made friends with thirty-one years ago on board the ship voyaging from Australia to S. Africa, should later on turn out to be none else than one of his great compeers in the literary world, Joseph Conrad, is one of the romances of literature. We know what a mysterious fascination the sea exercises over her prose-poet, Conrad, and how he knows no satiety in depicting her myriad moods. But seldom does Galsworthy go outside England for his scenes. *The Forest*, which transports us to the central African jungle and palpitates with the spirit of high ro-

mance in two of its acts ; *The Little Dream*, which throbs with the spell of Alpine peaks and mountain flowers ; and the couple of stories that carry us to Austria, are exceptions. But generally it is only in fallow moods intervening moments of creative urge is his imagination haunted by "the fairy lands forlorn."

Though born in Surrey, he is, like Blackmore, of Devonshire extraction, (as evidenced by the name, 'Galsworthy' common in that shire), and he has been long a resident in Devon on the eastern fringe of Dartmoor. But Devon does not loom as background in his novels and plays nor envelope them as atmosphere in anything like the vividness with which Wessex does in Hardy. Devon is nevertheless there in *A Man of Devon*, *The Patrician*, *Riding in mist*, *Moods*, *Songs and Doggerels*, and in *A Bit O'love*. The damp, misty moors, rolling to the horizon, lovely and dangerous, would never cease to exercise their magic over their child.

Galsworthy came to literature with the humanitarian ardour and exalted idealism of the Great English writers who have sought to lash men out of their self-righteousness and hypocrisy and sting them to shame for the countless wrongs of the poor. To 'aesthetes' who wish literature to be merely a thing of beauty and nothing else, the great writers who rouse the conscience and kindle dormant fires in the soul represent decadence. To others who contemplate the injustices of the social order with tolerating anger and mild pity through post-prandial whiffs of smoke, the burning indignation of authors like Shelley, Ruskin, Dickens, and Shaw, sound strident, and their earnestness plangent. To this class of

readers, to whom pointing a moral is a capital offence in literature, the noble purpose inspiring Galsworthy's plays may not be welcome.

Nor is he likely to please those who want a play to be an instrument of social reform, a peg on which to hang a fervent gospel. For Galsworthy never brings his ideas or problems to the forefront of his plays nor makes his characters incarnate points of view. Unlike Shaw he is artist first and propagandist second. His plays are interesting primarily for the imprimatur of truth and the authentic image of life in them, for the pathos and irony of situations, the inner significance of which is revealed to us as if by a lightning flash, for their technical perfection, for their atmosphere, for the passion that often vibrates through the restrained language, and more than all, for their matchless suggestiveness. But there is something deeper in them than all these ; for through these plays as through his novels runs an underchord of commiserating love for the bottom dog. Each one of them is built on the solid foundation of some social idea. In *Some platitudes concerning drama* Galsworthy says : "A drama must be shaped so as to have a spire of meaning. Every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral ; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day." This applies to all his plays ; only, we must note they contain the moral in perfect solution, the truth of presentment being never vitiated by any ulterior purpose, so that when we have finished a play we are haunted most by the story of human passion and frailty just unfolded to us, and by the fates of the characters. It should be a wonder if the reader or

spectator does not take the lesson of it all to heart and become wiser. Nevertheless, for a right understanding of his plays we must grasp the basic idea governing each. We cannot characterise the plan of a Galsworthy play more adequately than by quoting his own definition of a good plot. "A good plot is that sure edifice which slowly rises out of the interplay of circumstance on temperament and temperament on circumstance within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea." In the succeeding chapters we have attempted to indicate the *idée mère* of each play.

For another reason too Galsworthy may fail to appeal to over-zealous people. His poignant sympathy for the poor never blinds him to their defects. Unlike Dickens he never clothes them with a halo of false idealism. Jones in *The Silver Box* is far from being a glorified character. One of the subtlest touches in *Strife* is the look of fiendish envy that Madge Thomas casts on the gown of Enid's baby. The same play reveals unsparingly the disunion and inflammable temper of labourers for whom the dramatist's heart thaws with undisguised pity. Again, in *The Pigeon* we see the tragic inability of that good soul, Wellwyn, to reclaim the three wastrels at whose lot we do not know whether to laugh or to weep; before such lost ones the stoutest philanthropist would throw up his sponge in despair. Rightly eager to see life steadily and as a whole, Galsworthy aims at revealing hidden strains of goodness in hard and crusty characters. The reader will remember in *A Family Man* the sudden welling-up of gratitude in Builder's heart when, forlorn and forsaken by his family, his wife appears suddenly before him to lighten his gloom. This fair-minded readiness to dis-

cern and concede aught of good there may be on the other side, is not a quality that makes for popularity. Sober, poised, sensitive, restrained, and ill-fitted to play to the gallery, Galsworthy is bound to be caviare to the general. In *A Family Man*, *The Silver Box*, *Strife*, and *Loyalties*, we see him a master of that deadly form of satire which lies in exposing a cause out of the mouth of its own champions, vindicating thereby his art even while chastening the social conscience.

In several of his novels, *The Man of Property*, *In Chancery*, and *To Let*—the series being called by the author *The Forsyte Saga*—as well as in *The Island Pharisees*, *The Country House* and *The Freelanders*, Galsworthy has described the life of the upper middle classes of England with remorseless truth. Of noblemen, politicians, squires, clergymen, merchants and the intelligentsia as a whole, of that 'essential England' in which may be said to reside English culture, with its hollow conventions, false respectabilities, and class prejudices, insularities and selfishnesses, Galsworthy's plays and novels are a trenchant and methodical study. He began with a biological examination as it were of the middle class type, 'the most English portion of England,' in *The Man of Property*, the characters of which, James Forsyte, Jolyon Forsyte, Swithin Forsyte, Roger, Nicholas, and Timothy Forsyte, their sisters, children and nephews, being merely its diverse varieties. The defects and virtues of this professional gentry of England, which we shall in the following chapters call 'the Forsyte type' or 'the Forsyte world,' are summed up finally by that French critic, André Chevrillon, who is said to "know England better than

any living Frenchmen." They are "energy, invincible vitality, worship of health, taciturn pride, secret determination not to give oneself away, irreducible egotism, passion for property, tendency to appreciate everything in terms of money, open contempt for ideas, jealous individualism strangely combined with a superstitious respect for conventions and hostility to all who deviate from the prescribed and recognized pattern." When we come across Forsythe specimens in the plays we must remember these qualities. In most of the plays as in the novels we get also a study of the modern English family.

Except *The Forest*, *Justice*, *The Mob*, and the one-act playlets, all Galsworthy's plays are "three-acters". In them there is a severe economy of words, the full value wrung out of every word, and not a word too many. The economy of scenes is not less severe, each scene having a vital place in the conduct of the fable and in the revelation of character. Every scene and speech, issuing from character, leads to a suggestive finale that makes us pause and ponder over it all, as we do on finishing a Shakespearean tragedy. The end, happy or otherwise, is transitional as all events in life are—every end a beginning and every beginning an end. Of course, there is the sense of close demanded by drama. Rising sheer above sensational and melodramatic devices, the plays keep on the highways of common human experience, never heading towards either a crushing catastrophe or a miraculous denouement leading us to a finality of joy. The vista is never closed for the prospective imagination. Our playwright manages his curtains well so as to bring prominently into the minds of the spectator the inner significance of the scene and the play. The curtain

is rung down when we are on the crest of a wave of pathos or pity. Of singular beauty is the classic close of *The Fugitive*, *The Silver Box*, and *Joy*.

The characters do not speak in well-turned sentences, nor do they speak normally much. Their short unfinished snip-snaps are most suggestive, their sudden silences not less valuable, but often more, than their utterances—a delicate device with this dramatist. Witness how few are the words that Clare Dedmond in *The Fugitive* utters; many of them inexpressive, and withal most expressive, of her fine, intellectual, beauty-haunted, passionate nature. One has only to recall her words when she comes to Malise a second time to cast her lot with him. The speeches of the poor especially are straight from life, effortless and instinct with feeling. How spontaneous and natural are the speeches of the Jones, of the labourers in *Strife*, and of the waifs in *The Pigeon*!

The dialogue, never artificial, and seldom dull, keeps our interest on edge, not by incessant sparks of wit and irony, nor by lively thrust and parry of words, as in Congreve, but by delicate and subtle expression of character. In the matter of dialogue Galsworthy recks his own rede; for he says: "The art of writing true dramatic dialogue is an austere art, denying itself all license, grudging every sentence devoted to the mere machinery of the play, suppressing all jokes and epigrams severed from character, relying for fun and pathos on the fun and tears of life. From start to finish good dialogue is hand-made like good lace; clear, of fine texture, furthering with each thread the harmony and strength of design to which all must be subordinated." This applies admirably to Galsworthy's own achievement.

Written with an intimate knowledge of stagecraft, the plays anticipate and demand the highest histrionic powers on the part of the actors. They all act well, some superbly, and are best seen and heard rather than read. Nevertheless, to read them is to conjure up before our eyes a series of vivid pictures moving past us, athrill with life, movement, colour and passion, for Galsworthy is far from being a cold, intellectual analyst; we are energised by the ichor of a vigorously youthful literature when we feel the large sanity, the symphony of art and the noble humanity of these plays.

CHAPTER IV.

Plays based on a social idea or problem :

STRIFE—THE PIGEON—THE FOUNDATIONS—THE FUGITIVE—JUSTICE—THE SKIN GAME—WINDOWS.

STRIFE, (1909).

BY a searching analysis of the different predicaments and attitudes of masters and men during a strike, by vividly picturing, on the one hand the alarm in the minds of capitalists caused by rapid fall of dividends, and, on the other, the vacillations and divided counsels of labourers forced to truckle by the agonies of starving women and children, Galsworthy leads us in *Strife* to the moral how all this loss and wastage of human energy and these appalling sufferings could have been avoided at the very beginning with a little compromise. By an awful fatality, it would appear, human affairs must progress through a series of blunders that could have been averted by a little less of hardened selfishness on the part of the wealthy powerful and a little more of practical foresight on the part of the poor downtrodden. The Directors of the tin-plate works begin with a stubborn *non possumus*, and the workmen, inspired for the moment by the hypnotic power of a heroic leader, reject compromise that might have enabled them to present a solid front. The idealistic Roberts fails to gauge the limits of ordinary human endurance, the obdurate Anthony fails to make allowance

for the alarm of his colleagues in the face of terrible losses.

The characters of *Strife* are posed with reference to this moral. The directors, Anthony, Wilder, Wanklin, and Scantlebury, representing four different temperaments, are balanced against the workmen, Roberts, Thomas, Green, and Rous. Roberts, Anthony, Harness, Edgar and Frost, embody five typical attitudes towards this class-war. As in *The Silver Box* this symmetry of conception results in symmetry of dramatic structure, which reminds us of the contrasted characters and balanced construction of Shakespeare's early plays.

Somehow, in spite of his being the prophetic voice of capitalism, Anthony does not grip us as a living personality, quite so much as Roberts, though he is powerfully conceived. Anthony is the heart of Capital personified, bent on fighting to the last ditch before surrendering itself. That the two classes, rich and poor, are eternally ordained by the scheme of things; that both cannot be masters in a house; that wealth spells culture and poverty its antithesis; that to surrender to labour even by so much as an iota is but to herald a long tale of surrenders until it ends in the submergence of the wealthy and the dawn of mob-rule;—these are not mere theories or even convictions with Anthony, they are the bed-rock of his creed. Plutocracy is a religion with him. It has endowed him with a preternatural clearness of foresight as to how concession is bound to follow concession as a foregone sequence until capital is swamped by labour. It is this unshakable certitude and prevision of the future that makes him adamant to the last. He is a martyr to the cause of

wealth. What if the cause is narrow? What if all schemes to uplift the poor are to him but so many mines sprung under the fortress of wealth, and generous sentiments but a tissue of moonshine? He challenges our admiration all the same as irresistibly as Shylock, or Satan of *Paradise Lost*. Anthony's character is, however, lined with silver. We recall the love he bears to and evokes from his children, the respect he commands from Tench and Frost, and their personal attachment to him. With a lynx-eye for character, tardy to take personal offence, his temper mastered by a despotic will, he seems born to rule. No wonder, the rough and brusque Wilder, the subtle and suave Wanklin, and the panicky Scantlebury blench before his inexorable negatives. If they could help it they would not vote him down but win him over. Anthony's personal feelings are touched only when his own son turns round to accuse him and his colleagues of having the blood of Mrs. Roberts on their hands. His passionate repulsion of the charge is an index of his attitude towards the strike:

Anthony. [*His voice grows stronger and stronger, his feeling more and more made manifest.*] I am not aware that if my adversary suffer in a fair fight not fought by me, it is *my* fault. If I fall under *his* feet—as fall I may—I shall not complain. That will be my look-out—and this is—his. I cannot separate, as I would, these men from their women and children. A fair fight is a fair fight! Let them learn to think before they pick a quarrel!

Personally he is not a bad man at all. He would in his own way help the poor and do them little acts of

goodness. He was once fond of Annie (Mrs. Roberts), who, even when her life ebbs away fast, has no harsh words against the man Anthony. But to any such idea as raising the lot of the poor as a class he is mortally opposed. Of fine old gentlemen, genuinely kind to dependents and subordinates in the patriarchal way of Sir Roger de Coverley, but sworn enemies of any movement aiming at a general advance of the poor—men who are by no means rare among the English aristocracy—Anthony is a type.

Anthony's colleagues represent more repellent worshippers of the golden calf. In a shrewd little passage in Act III, marked by malicious irony, Galsworthy makes Wilder and Scantlebury reveal their cloven hoofs.

WILDER. It's a dead-lock then. (*Letting his hands drop with a sort of despair.*) Now I shall never get off to Spain!

WANKLIN. (*Retaining a trace of irony.*) You hear the consequences of your victory, chairman?

WILDER. (*With a burst of feeling.*) My wife's ill!

SCANTLEBURY. Dear, dear! you don't say so!

WILDER. If I don't get her out of this cold, I won't answer for the consequences.

Just then Edgar breaks the news of Mrs. Robert's death through sheer cold and hunger. And what sort of sympathy for the poor wretch does it evoke from Scantlebury whom we have seen just now gushing with such tender solicitude for Mrs. Wilder? "You don't suggest that we could have helped the poor thing?" And Wilder, who became so desperate because he couldn't leave that very day for Spain, and so gloomily anxious about his wife's malaise,—what has he to say?

He has absolutely no feeling to waste on that luckless creature, Mrs. Roberts, though in such a fluster to wash his hands of her death: "The woman was in bad health. Nobody can say there's any responsibility on us. At least—not on me." A little further on, when Edgar suggests the possibility of a coroner's enquiry, Scantlebury, who had just then covered his ears, because too sensitively organized to hear home-truths, suddenly pricks them up and cries alarmed: "Coroner's jury! No, no, it's not a case for that?"—an abject poltroon when anything threatened his pocket!

In sharp contrast to Anthony stands Roberts, the hero. His fellow-labourers, concerned only with their immediate present, would rest content with some alleviation of their lot, a creature comfort or two more. Their endurance is limited by their outlook and demands, which concern only themselves and their families. Not so Roberts, with his gaze on the future of miserable humanity. He would gladly give his life for posterity, nay, suffer what is to him worse than death, the sight of his wife sinking by inches. He would permit himself no children—why bring forth creatures foredoomed to slavery? For such a man to have spent all his savings in relieving the wretchedness of his fellow-workmen was no great sacrifice. A martyr to the noblest cause on earth, he expects them—frail flesh—to rise to his sublime vision. His pity for them is dashed with impatience at the earthiness of their spirits. Men like him and Stephen More (in *The Mob*) are torch-bearers of noble causes. They light up fires that burn through generations unborn, though judged by immediate material values, they might seem to fail for the moment. "'Tis not for this little

moment of time we're fighting," he says, "not for ourselves, our own little bodies, and their wants; 'tis for all those that come after throughout all time. Oh! men—for the sake of them, don't roll up another stone upon their heads, don't help to blacken the sky, and let the bitter sea in over them. They are welcome to the worst that can happen to me, to the worst that can happen that can happen to us all, aren't they—aren't they?" He has seen through that "white-faced, stony-hearted monster," Capital, as surely as Anthony has seen through the insidious thing called Labour.

The mob-mind has not changed since the days of Brutus and Antony. Galvanized for the moment into exalted fervour by the winged words and mesmeric eyes of an orator, once these are withdrawn, they swing back to prose and prudence. It should not surprise us, therefore, if the workmen, racked by the long-drawn agony of hunger and privation, not made of the stuff of martyrs, are unable to sustain themselves long merely on the bread of ideals. It is this that poor Roberts fails to see. A touch of pathetic irony brings his speech to a close. Even while he is fiercely defying Nature, Nature has done for him. Madge staggers the stout-hearted leader with a nearer call of the human, by breaking the tragic news of his wife's impending death.

Both Anthony and Roberts are betrayed by their cowardly followers. It is a powerful scene that brings face to face the two men, deserted by their supporters:—

ROBERTS. Then you're no longer Chairman of this company! [*Breaking into half-mad laughter.*] Ah, ha—Ah, ha, ha! They've thrown ye over—thrown

over their chairman : ah—ha—ha ! [*With a sudden dreadful calm.*] So—they've done us both down, Mr. Anthony.

The other characters, as we said, stand for attitudes and types. The noble Edgar represents stray idealists among the rich we come across once in a blue moon. Enid is the charitable woman unable to understand the new self-respect growing among the poor, and is therefore shocked by their pride. Frost stands for the old-world notion of loyal service to the ruling class : one man is born an under-dog, another a gentleman, and it is wrong to question or alter the decree of birth. Mrs. Roberts is of the race of Mrs. Jones—a monument of sufferance and resignation knowing only the duty of love.

In this technically perfect play, Galsworthy aims at maintaining a poised judgment and giving a correct social survey. Always avoiding screeching extremes, he never spoils a case by overstating it, for sanity runs in his blood—the blood of a humanitarian burning with pity for the poor. Roberts, Frome, and More most reveal their creator.

THE PIGEON, (1912).

This play, written in the best vein of Galsworthy's ironic humour drenched with pity, and purporting to be a fantasy, is a remarkably faithful study of certain types of irreclaimables, while it is also a shrewd satire on those who attempt to reclaim them with doctrinaire theories. It is more than these, for it contains the pathetic portrait of a man so tyrannised by his goodness that he is unable to refrain from his charities even when he knows that they only make the recipients sink deeper into vice, for the deeper they sink the more he loves them. The play

is a study, in other words, of certain hopeless types of riff-raff and the utter futility of charity and reform directed towards them.

The most interesting of these parasites is the Frenchman, Ferrand, congenital vagrant and hater of work. He is one of those wild birds that love to wanton in the sky, neither toiling nor spinning, nor taking thought for the morrow. A born hedonist, with an irresponsible *joie de vivre* in him, he only asks society to feed him, so that he may pursue love and pleasure without let or hindrance. What demand can be simpler? And yet cruel society denies him these elementary conditions of life! He is virtuoso, ironist, attitudiniser, and philosopher. He pleases Wellwyn by remarking the wild pleasure-hungering expression of Mrs. Megan's eye in the picture. During the few moments of Wellwyn's absence he changes his attitude with lightning rapidity, to indulge in high jinks with the flower-girl. An adept at plucking pigeons, he knows Wellwyn to the core, and touches in him a responsive chord when, on the night of Christmas eve, he says unctuously :

" And to think that in a few minutes, He will be born! Monsieur! The world would reproach you for your goodness to me. If He himself were on earth now, there would be a little heap of gentlemen writing to the journals every day to call Him sloppee sentimentalist! And what is very funny, these gentlemen, they would all be most strong Christians. (*He regards Wellwyn deeply.*) But that will not trouble you Monsieur; I saw well from the first that you are no Christian. You have so kind a face." With what consummate art does he affect the language of an ardent humanitarian speaking bitterly of un-

Christian Christians! Irony is his element. When the drunken cab-man comatosely imitates a horse champing its bit, Ferrand says that he has a philosophy that comes from horses and from standing still; and later, calls him "a verree docile potentate," and his over-coat a "a coronation robe." He asks Wellwyn not to be concerned about Timson's being drenched outside for he is "wet inside." A quaint ironic wisdom escapes from him in his aphorism: 'For the great part of mankind to see anything is fatal.' Again, in his roguish remark to his benefactor at the close of the second act: "You are now debarrassed of us three, Monsieur; I leave you instead—these sirs," he hits sober truth, for the three faddists are no better companions to Wellwyn than the three rag-tags.

The second of this trio is the "Roman Catholic atheist" (!), Mrs. Megan. An incorrigible light-o'-love, she thinks of dancing even while she is drowning. The third is the dipsomaniac, Timson, who calls himself a teetotaller and an honest workman. As Wellwyn puts it, he is an "individualist as regards solids, but a socialist as regards liquids...*vice versa* according to taste." It is these sharks that Sir Thomas Hoxton, Professor Calway, and Canon Bertley set about to reclaim with their crotchety theories. In his conception of these theory-grinders as well as of kind-hearted Wellwyn, Galsworthy has shown a fine sense of humour. It penetrates dialogues and situations too. Nothing could be more droll than the way in which the reformers chime in the same word when each wishes to assert his own theory:—

Hoxton. My theory—!

Calway. My theory—!

Bertley. My theory—!

They stop surprised. Wellwyn makes a gesture of discomfort, as they speak again with still more unanimity.)

Hoxton. My—!

Calway. My—!

Bertley. My—!

(They stop in greater surprise.)

This play is a tragedy of outcasts though Galsworthy, hiding his tears of pity under smiles, invests it with genial laughter and kindly irony.

THE FOUNDATIONS, (1917).

Poverty and unemployment, the effect of the Great War on the poor, and the irresponsibility of the yellow press, are the problems that underlie *The Foundations*. Like *The Pigeon* it is a humorous comedy pitched in a light key, but its satire on the press is biting. Though first produced in 1917, it is in substance a post-war play. It reflects the spread of socialistic fervour among the masses, partly because of the war, partly because of the despair born of unemployment. Thrilling with a nascent hatred of aristocrats, they long for a "bloody revolution," for otherwise they think they have no hope. Their ideas are crude, and their fury indiscriminate. But genuine kindness from the rich has the effect of allaying their truculence at once and of evoking from them a grateful affection. It is to point out this lesson that the playwright has created Lord William Dromondy, an exception among his class,—one who would go far in his sympathy for the poor short of selling his house and gravitating to their level. Many a barbed shaft is directed against the

Press, hungry to exploit, if not also to create sensation by unblushing exaggerations and inventions. When the Press (personified as a character) finds that what promised to be a sensational case turns out to be a mare's nest, the chagrin on his face is such a study ! The play is irradiated by the figure of charming Little Anne. With her joyous irresponsibility of childhood she acts in the play the part of a comic chorus as it were. The distinctions between rich and poor have no meaning for her. She is bored to death for want of some capital fun, and would give anything for such a splendid sight as that of their grand mansion being blown up with a bomb. Older than Olive of *The Mob*, she represents a maturer stage of the child-mind.

JUSTICE, (1910).

Justice is a bitter indictment of English law and of the penal system. People commit crimes often, not from any inherent turpitude, but from dire provocation or temptation that proves too powerful for them, either because they are neurotic or mentally deficient, or because of poverty and drink. Modern thought regards crime as a disease, and as such, curable under proper corrective conditions. Law in most countries, while it meets efficiently the general case, makes no provision for special cases. Social thinkers in the twentieth century have awakened to the need of revising altogether penal codes as they obtain now ; for they are based on utter ignorance of criminal psychology and are the legacy of primitive notions of *lex talionis* — the law of tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye. This vindictive attitude is happily beginning to disappear, yielding place to the preventive and curative attitude. Especially in Ame-

rica, prisons and reformatories are so organised as to redeem delinquents from their aberrations and wean them to useful citizenship. Very few offenders belong to what is called the 'criminal type.' Therefore, in enlightened systems of prison administration, the prisoners, being regarded as suffering from mental diseases or deficiency, are not treated as responsible people. In the case of every delinquent the question is asked whether the treatment helps or retards his reclamation. In England, where institutions are comparatively conservative, reform is rather shy in these matters. In 1910, when *Justice* was written, conditions in England were much worse; and the play is one of the earliest strokes for a noble cause.

The law being what it is in England, the most enlightened judge must administer it as it stands, however much he might feel that the so-called justice crushes out the life of the offender. The lawyer's clerk, Falder, wrung with pity for the poor woman, Ruth Honeywill, and at his wit's end for money to release her from the clutches of her brutal husband, forges the cheque in an ill-starred moment. A weak and emotional character, he was not himself when he did it. But that moment decides his fate. The wheels of justice, once started, grind the victim down—a victim not of injustice but of justice! The play dwells more on the expiation than on the motives and stress of the crime. In scenes of lurid vividness, depicting unvarnished facts, Galsworthy traces the effects of prison life on Falder (and other prisoners) and the inexorable steps that lead him to his second arrest and suicide. He is arrested a second time, because, mortally sick of the prison from which

he has been released, he fails to report himself to the authorities; and again because, an ex-criminal, denied work everywhere for want of reference, and reduced to starvation, he has given false reference.

In a scene of terrible silence, in which not a word is spoken, Galsworthy shows Falder in prison—a scene that reveals more than words the horrors, the nervous agony, and the stifling misery of solitary confinement. While lashing the system, Galsworthy is scrupulously fair to its administrators. There is not even a suggestion of satire on the judge or the lawyers. One of the lawyers, Frome, is the spokesman of the dramatist himself. Nor is there one accent of bitterness against the prison officials; the doctor and the governor are shown as especially considerate and humane, and their leniency goes as far as the regulations would allow them. The Hows, father and son, are drawn with admirable humanity. Their clerk, Cokeson, is quite a lovable figure, all goodness, and might have stepped into the play from one of Dickens' novels. There is unspeakable pathos in the fates of Ruth Honeywill and Falder and an exquisite delicacy in the story of their tragic love.

THE FUGITIVE, (1913).

The interest of *Justice and Strife* is centred mainly on humanitarian and industrial problems; the interest of *Joy* and *A Bit o' Love* hinges solely on character and fate; midway between the two sets of plays comes *The Fugitive*, for, while it is enveloped by a social problem, it depends for its interest on the noble character and tragic story of the heroine. From the social point of view, it brings the Ithuriel's spear to the matrimonial lie, and points

out the sacredness of revolting against the merely physical view of married life ; and from the economic point of view, it points towards the cross that awaits a woman who breaks covert in order to save her soul.

Clare Dedmond, the heroine, one of those women "all vibration, iced over with a trained stoicism of voice and manner," has been married four years to George Dedmond, son of General Sir Charles Dedmond. A fine-strung nature, endowed with sensibilities of art and poetry, there is between her and her gross husband little affinity of soul. The spirit of wedlock flown, their married life, she feels, has become a farce. Her husband, ridden by good form and of the earth earthy, is one of those who take a frankly biological view of marriage. "The marriage of minds," and "the music of souls" are but mystical frauds to him. But these are the life-breath of Clare ; and she sees before her nothing but long years of heart-ache and emptiness, dragging her to lumpish animal life. Existence with him is impossible. She makes up her mind to leave him so that she might preserve her soul. To keep up appearances as Mrs. Dedmond and sponge on her husband—even *that* her parents-in-law and husband would allow her, but not her going away. She had only to play at being a wife—why, she could console herself as she pleased, nay, even have a private room for herself which her husband would respect—and they would support her. Can charity go further ? One could welter in vices and run amok in society, if only one propitiated the Moloch of respectability. One had only to placate it, to tread, to one's heart's content, the primrose path of dalliance. Nothing is more loathsome to Clare than this. She will

not barter her soul away for a mess of potage, but fling herself into the broad world, drudge, starve, die, in order to save it. But where would she go in London, huge, python-like, swallowing the poor and tainting the innocent? She will not be a burden on her father who had a family of six children to support on paltry means, nor be a drag on her brother, a captain in India, just keeping himself above water. But she has a good friend in Malise, the impecunious man-of-letters, whose heart is aflame against all forms of soulless respectability. But her feelings for him are not yet love, and she will not live on his charity.

Three months pass by, Clare has been a shop girl, but not safe from lascivious eyes. From one of her pursuers she had to escape by threatening to stab him with her brooch. Disgusted with the company of shop girls and fed up with slaving routine, she returns to Malise, for these three months have matured her feelings into love. Three months more, happy as a dream, flit by with the needy journalist. But one fine morning she finds that Dedmond has brought against him an action for damages; and what is more unlucky, the paper to which he has been writing throws him overboard as 'improper.' Incidentally coming to know the secret of the damages from the house-keeper, Clare sells her last remaining trinket—an emerald brooch, sole souvenir of her mother—settles the outstanding bills of Malise and flings out once again into the streets. A kindly veil is drawn over the trials, and the long spells of starvation she experiences. Trudge, trudge, trudge; weary and jaded, we find her at the hotel, Gascony, on Derby day, a place haunted by ominous birds of night, ready to drag straying innocence into the mire. Her

last penny gone, on the very edge of life, we see her still a lady to her finger-tips, preserving the snow-white purity of her soul untarnished to the last. Her innate dignity of manner and nameless grace shame into virtue a shady young man who has ventured to sit by her. The magnetism of a stainless spirit infects even the waiter. Two wretched men, who prowl about, approach her with inimitable insolence and invite her to a tryst at dinner. She looks on patiently, but the stout heart is broken. The rakes stroll away. Clare has not moved, nor changed the direction of her gaze. Suddenly she thrusts her hand into the pocket of the cloak that hangs behind her, and brings out the little blue bottle which six months ago, she took from Malise. She pulls out the cork and pours the whole contents with her champagne. "She lifts the glass, holds it before her—smiling, as if to call a toast, then puts it to her lips and drinks. Still smiling, she sets the empty glass down, and lays the gardenia flowers against her face. Slowly she droops back in her chair, the drowsy smile still on her lips; the gardenias drop into her lap; her arms relax, her head falls forward on her breast. And the voices behind the screen talk on, and the sounds of joy from the supper party wax and wane. From the distance is heard the sound of the horn playing the last seven notes of the old song : *This day a stag must die.* From the last notes of all, the sound flies up to an octave higher, sweet and thin like a spirit passing, till it is drowned once more in laughter. The young man has covered his eyes with his hands; Arnaud (the waiter) is crossing himself fervently; the languid lord stands gazing, with one of the dropped gardenias twisted in his fingers; and

the woman bending over Clare kisses her forehead." So, after life's fitful fever, she sleeps well.

In the third Act of this pathetic drama occurs the scene between Clare and Malise, quivering with delicate suggestion. From a passionate heart, thinner spray of words cannot jet forth—words aglow with meaning, and rich with the perfume of a noble woman-soul.

The continuous singing of "This day a stag must die," is liable to be regarded as a cheap symbolism, but it is well to remember that life, to the seeing eye, is full of such mystic correspondences. The courtesan's kiss is another effect that might appear banal, but it makes us feel, more than anything else, the chastening effect of a pure spirit even on coarse natures when it has passed away.

THE SKIN GAME.

The play is a deftly disguised plea for charity to women who, though they have outgrown the immoral life to which they were once driven by poverty are despised as outcasts by respectable, because more fortunate, women.

The Hillcristis of Deepwater belong to an old family tracing its pedigree at least as far back as Elizabeth. They are people more with a past than a present, having been forced during their vicissitudes to sell away big slices of their estates; and thus they find themselves neighbours of the flourishing Hornblower who has grown rich on his potteries. Unlike the Hillcristis he has a present but no past. With them he is no *persona grata*, for, his aggressive business push apart, he has blackened the lovely atmosphere of Deepwater with the smoke of his chimneys. It goes

against the grain therefore of Mrs. Hillerist to pardon the proximity of this parvenu with his rude and uncurried manners. But the head and front of his offence was his summary ejection, in violation of a tacit understanding, of folk who had been thirty years tenants of the Hillerists. Again, Hornblower's new-fangled notions of improving the lot of his workmen are repugnant to them. To crown it all, Mrs. Hillerist is in the know of a terrible secret about Hornblower's daughter-in-law, Chloe, a secret not known to Hornblower himself. She sends Chloe, an outcast for what she knows, to Coventry and cuts her dead in her own house. Hornblower, tracing this contempt on the part of Mrs. Hillerist to the hauteur of superior rank, vows revenge. He would have Mrs. Hillerist beware that his own star is in the ascendant and that hers is on the decline; he would blockade their wretched remnant of an estate with a cordon of his lands, factories, and lorry tracks and smother them with smoke. The enemies are bent on feeding fat the grudge they owe each other. A boxing-match in which the wrestlers slog each other's bare bodies until they bleed is known as a 'skin game.' Well, it is to be a skin game between Hornblower and Mrs. Hillerist, both vindictive when their blood is up.

Hornblower's is the first move in the war. Just the piece of land needed to hem in the Hillerists is for sale. It becomes a Naboth's vineyard between the two families. In the auction, Hornblower and Hillerist outbid each other with mad frenzy. Now it seems as if Hillerist has thwarted the fiendish designs of Hornblower, and now the other way round. Finally, Hornblower scores off his foe by gulling him with a trick. For the moment it appears that all is over

with Hillerist, and that his fate is really 'deep water'. But the woman on the war-path has yet a weapon in reserve, her deadliest,—the secret about Chloe. And she springs the fatal surprise when her adversary is gloating on his victory: "would he choose to sell back the land to her for half the price and so escape with the skin of his teeth, or submit to that noisome affair of Chloe's being bruited abroad?" At first he thinks that in impotent revenge she was but trying to blackmail him with slander. But next morning she coolly gives him the eye-opener: "when cases are arranged, Mr. Hornblower, the man who is to be divorced often visits a hotel with a strange woman. I am extremely sorry to say that your daughter-in-law, before her marriage, was in the habit of being employed as such a woman." And she produces as witness one of those very men who so employed Chloe. It simply shatters Hornblower, pitching him in a terrible dilemma; for the poor woman, now with child, and passionately fond of her husband, grovels at his feet and suing piteously for mercy, entreats him not to tell Charlie. After all, the grandchild will be his. He vacillates, feeling the horror of a secret between him and his daughter-in-law, but she threatens him:

Chloe. (*Suddenly fierce*) You must keep it, you shall! I won't have him told. Don't make me desperate! I can be—I didn't live that life for nothing.

Hornblower. (*Staring at her revealed in a new light*) Ay; ye look a strange wild woman, as I see ye. And we thought the world of ye!

Chloe. I love Charlie; I'm faithful to him. I can't live without him. You'll never forgive me,

I know ; but Charlie —! (*stretching out her hands*). To be banished from his love is to her worse than death. Poor Hornblower is thus driven to sell for less than half its price the new lands, won so desperately, to Mrs. Hillcrist by way of hush-money.

Meanwhile Charlie's suspicions about Chloe are roused by her skittish behaviour and confirmed by his father's resale of the land. Chloe is in agonies. If only his suspicions could be disarmed ! A temporary gleam of hope is given her by Hillcrist and his daughter Jill, who, all sympathy for her, undertake to allay Charlie's suspicions. But the gleam vanishes sooner than a glance of the mind, for Charlie has wormed the secret out of Hillcrists's agent, Dawker, the evil genius in the play.

The secret bursts and the air reeks with rumours, to the utter dismay of Hornblower, who immediately whisks off to Mrs. Hillcrist to exact forfeiture. For all he knows, the Hillcrists are the most treacherous hypocrites on earth. Arrived at their house, he sees the deed in Dawker's pocket, makes a snatch at it, and a scuffle ensues. They are parted by Rolf (Hornblower's younger son) and Jill, and the motionless body of Chloe, apparently dead, is brought in. She is lifted and borne home. Thus two people fighting, a poor woman not concerned, becomes a pawn in the game and goes under. Mrs. Hillcrist, a tigress when roused, is always kind at heart. When Chloe was almost fainting in the auction-room she sent her smelling-salts. Now she telephones to her doctor and asks him to go at once to the Hornblower's to attend on Chloe.

The play closes with Hillcrist's realising a painful truth that *he* should be master in his house, and he

puts the lesson of the play pointedly when he asks : "when we began this fight, we had clean hands—are they clean now ? What's gentility worth if it can't stand fire ? ", as it is he who illustrates the gospel of love and sympathy to a fallen woman. He would never "cast the stone." There is not even a distant tinge of the Pharisee in either his or Jill's sympathy, so full and so heart-felt. "I dare say I'd have done the same. I should be the last to judge—," says Hillerist. Galsworthy would have us understand the plight of a woman like Chloe :

Chloe. (*With a touch of defiance*) I'm a true wife to him.

Jill. Of course we know that.

Hillerist. It's all unspeakably sad. Deception's horribly against the grain—but—

Chloe. (*Eagerly*) When I deceived him I'd have deceived God Himself—I was so desperate. You've never been right down in the mud. You can't understand what I've been through.

The Skin Game has a fourfold interest. For one thing, it is a thrilling story which keeps our interest in tension to the last, surprise following on surprise, all in obedience to the logic of character and initial circumstance, and so keeping the play severely above melodrama. In the auction scene the delirious excitement of the two bidders holds our breath in suspense. Secondly, some of its characters are well realised. Thirdly, it is a close study of the clash between two well-recognised social classes ; and finally, it has a psychological interest in its study of the rather hen-pecked and somewhat shilly-shally, but thoroughly noble, Hillerist, and of Chloe, soiled

in career and character, but sound at the core revealed to us in her moments of anguish as, when in her desperate and frantic endeavour to conceal her seedy past from the world, she offers herself to that villain, Dawker, as his price for secrecy. We see her quick transitions from wheedling to reviling, from wrath to appeal, from one emotion to another, and the rapid chase of one thought by another. Dawker departs, and almost on his heels Charlie enters. The woman immediately transforms herself into a sly, secretive creature, coaxing, subtle, and panther-like, and asks him with seductive blandishments to drop the fight with the Hillcrists, all the while studying his face with furtive glances. Her *ruse de guerre* is quite feminine. He should stop it for her sake ; and when he is not agreeable she tells him with a calculated bitterness, of course assumed: "No it's nothing of course—what I want." And when she has gone too far and roused his suspicion, she brings him round with a bewitching glance and a soft word which women of her type have always at command. The scene is a master-piece.

WINDOWS, (1922).

This play is a powerful plea for justice to another type of outcast women. Young Faith Bly, brought to bed of a baby, born out of wedlock, hears from her friends how such children are taken away from their mothers by the Law, and how they die. The poor girl, desperate about the future safety of her baby, smothers it unconsciously in a nervous fit. As we have already seen in *Justice*, the law is blind to special cases, and the girl gets three years. Released from prison, and baptized by sorrow, she might have turned a new page in her life ; might have, for, as

society goes, she is denied service every where, being, as usual, demanded references. Finally she casts anchor as parlour-maid in the house of Geoffrey March, freelance in literature. Though Mrs. March (the decisive middle-class woman of Galsworthy) is dead against the admission of such a 'baggage', she is prevailed on by her generous husband to give Faith a chance. Their son, Johnny, after three years in the war-front, has returned, having undergone a different sort of baptism from that of Faith, that of blood and fire. The war over, the ideals of chivalry towards the weak and helpless seem to him to have dissolved like a mirage and to have no place in society, but he would cling to the last spar, for he believes in real sacrifice. Nobly idealistic, he takes pity on the derelict, but irresistible, Faith, with her pathetic story. In a pensive hour, when the rain is pattering outside, she narrates to him the gloom and the gray of her prison life. Of the same family as Clare Dedmond, she is one of those fine natures who respond like the Aeolian harp to light, music, flowers, and colour. We remember the daughters of George Eliot's imagination—Maggie Tulliver and Hetty Sorrel—and George Eliot herself. Sensuous beauty acts on such natures like magic; they are made for love. As Faith speaks of the blank and gruesome void of the prison and the terror of its loneliness, Johnny, who has gone through similar, if not the same, experiences in the war, is wrought into sympathy—so intensive that a passionate kiss is its only expression. It was but a momentary lapse, not real love, on the part of Johnny, for he regrets it at once. In that interesting moment they are caught red-handed. Mrs. March, like all mothers, in such matters, puts the whole

blame on "the designing mixx". The woman is to pay, as usual. But then the situation is saved and the mother brought round by the spirited Johnny going on a splendid hunger-strike. Faith is about to be re-admitted. Meanwhile, she, who had all along been thirsting for love, has, not knowing the man's nefarious trade, fallen a prey to one of those who live on a woman's incomes—a 'soo-tener'. Faith would have no charity from the Marches, and she prepares to go with her new-found sweetheart. Johnny, seeing through the villain, tries to rescue her from him, but in vain. In the nick of time, a police man, scenting the animal, arrives; and Faith is narrowly snatched out of the vulture's fell clutches. But the cold home of the Marches is not congenial atmosphere for a flower longing for light and warmth; Faith, therefore bids them good-bye and goes out into the broad world. Let us hope that she does not degenerate into the rouged haunter of clubs.

Neither Johnny's idealistic view of human nature nor Mrs. March's cynical view of it, is right: "Neither up—nor down—but straight in the face!" Human nature asserts itself, resisting artificial warps, just as windows retain their colour, though they might be swabbed ever so many times. That is the doctrine of the philosophical window-cleaner, Mr. Bly, Faith's father, perhaps the finest character in the play. Human instincts will always assert themselves, a truth to be welcomed and to be regretted, as he sadly realizes. This accounts for the eternal contradictions in human nature. Some impulses are to be fostered and others repressed. People, who keep their garments clean, because saved by a strong instinct of self-preservation, are unable to *see* other's nature as they do their own. Mrs. March herself once worked among

the factory girls, but came off untarnished. Not so, Faith, more passionate and more sensitive to lights and shadows. The poet, Burns, exclaimed :

“O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see ourselves as ithers see us.”

The converse of the prayer would be equally true of our limitations. “One man’s disposition is another man’s indisposition,” is one of Bly’s wise and sad apophthegms. “All this depression comes of having high hopes; Progress is an illusion” says he. We must not, however, mistake these views for Galsworthy’s own.

The close of this play, though so true to life and so natural, comes on us as a surprise. That is only one more word of praise for the author’s dramatic art.

CHAPTER V

The Forsyte World.

I *THE SILVER BOX—THE ELDEST SON—A FAMILY MAN.* II *OLD ENGLISH—THE FOREST.*

I

THE SILVER BOX (1906).

THIS play, so remarkable for its craftsmanship, was the first that Galsworthy wrote. It exposes the travesty of justice which makes it possible for a rich man committing the same offence, under the same circumstances, as a poor man, to escape the meshes of the law, while the latter gets entangled. Further, the play points out the contrast between the codes of ethics required from the poor and the rich. In this case, the law is put in motion against the luckless charwoman, if not exactly by the culprit himself, by his father, Barthwick (Sr.), in the name of 'principle', when he knows full well that his own scapegrace of a son could at that very moment be committed for theft. This worthy scion of the family, Jack Barthwick, while deep in liquor, has quarrelled with a demi-rep over night, and in his tipsy humour carried home her reticule and purse. Reeling and lurching, he reaches home and fumbles at the latchkey, when a certain drunken loafer, hanging about, helps to turn it and open the door. Tottering into the dining-room he asks Jones—for it is he, the husband of the charwoman—to enter and have a smoke, and take anything he liked. Jones, hopelessly fuddled and not knowing what he was doing, pockets the silver

cigarette box and goes home. The next day, having received intimation from the elder Barthwick about the theft of the box, and the circumstantial evidence pertaining to it, a detective comes to the Jones' room to arrest the suspect, Mrs. Jones. The husband tries to convince him by verbal protestations that he, and not she, is the real culprit, but failing, a scuffle ensues, in which Jones deals the detective a blow. Hauled up to the Court for assault of the police, Jones tries to make the court understand the circumstances that compelled him to make the so-called assault, but in vain. The Court takes him at his word when, exonerating his wife from the charge of theft he pleads *guilt* to it himself; but he protests that it was no theft as he was expressly allowed by Jack to carry the box home. "Would he deny it now?" "If the court was going to convict him for it, it must in justice convict Jack also, for had he not robbed the woman of her purse?" His pathetic protestations are all to no purpose, for he has no lawyer to plead his case as the Barthwicks have. *They* could control the machinery and myrmidons of the law, not he! The magistrate calls him "a nuisance to the community",—just the phrase that the elder Barthwick used at home to his son, in sheer disgust and anger; but what a difference! The one gets the father's phrase, and the other the magistrate's sentence! "Call this justice? What about 'im? 'E got drunk! 'E took the purse— 'e took the purse", cries Jones in frantic despair. "But it's *is* money, money got off—*justice!* (*The prisoner's door is shut on Jones, and from seedy-looking men and women comes a hoarse and whispering groan.*) The curtain is rung down not without one more touch of irony, one more

touch of pathos. Jack, throwing up his head, walks with a swagger to the corridor, Barthwick following. Turning to him with a humble gesture, Mrs. Jones cries piteously : "Oh ! Sir !—" (*Barthwick hesitates, then yielding to the nerves, he makes a shame-faced gesture of refusal, and hurries out of Court. Mrs. Jones stands looking after him,*)

We pity the plight of the wretch, Jones, who has been led by inevitable stages, from unemployment and poverty to aimless drifting and desperation, from desperation to drink, from drink to recklessness and domestic violence. It is only under drink that he behaved brutally to his wife ; at other times he had as much self-respect as John Barthwick, M. P. ; certainly, far more honesty and straightforwardness ; and by the side of that whelp, Jack, he is a perfect gentleman. He was so tired of seeking for work that he had to give it up as hopeless. The despair thus born would drive even noble natures to crime. Poverty acts like gravitation in the moral sphere, dragging even men of inflexible character into dubious courses. By a series of vivid flashes the dramatist lights us into the successive steps of Jones' degradation, so that we end with nothing but pity for him, as we do with nothing but contempt for Jack Barthwick.

The play swings alternately between two sets of scenes, the one revealing the innate spark of worth in the socially outcast Jones (husband and wife)—not quite smothered by poverty in the man, and glowing resplendent in the woman ; and the other, ripping open the moral ulcers of the rich and respectable Barthwicks, all the more ugly for their wealth and social standing. Of course, Mr. and Mrs. Barthwick are

not without grains of human feeling, as Jones is not without touches of the unregenerate man. Galsworthy, we must remember, never oversteps the modesty of nature. The Barthwicks represent a phase of "the Forsytes,"—the upper middle-class of England—of whom we have spoken in Chapter III. As we have seen, "the love of the specie more than of our species" is one of their traits. The little cant that they may develop about social welfare and the rest of it is only a means to self-advancement and social position. Caste is a veritable fetish with them; decorum, the very breath of their nostrils; and conventions almost a religion. Being great friends of Mrs. Grundy, they throw a kindly veil over their own sexual lapses, while they are scandalized by the pale imitations of the poor; in such matters they do not stick at measuring themselves by one law and the poor by another.

Barthwick (Sr.), Liberal M.P., is a typical member of his class. He has a mortal dread of "things getting into papers." It is this fear that prompts him to pay off the money to the 'unknown woman' and so hush up the matter. The young profligate knows it so well that he flings it in his father's face, when taxed by him for his vices: "You wouldn't have helped me this time, I know, if you hadn't been scared the thing would get into the papers." Later on, Barthwick, quite upset at the prospect of the whole scandal getting wind, entreats Roper to keep the purse out of the papers. Evidently, honour with these men has absolutely no relation to honesty! And when Mrs. Barthwick shows herself unable to understand the danger of publicity ahead, he accuses her of having no more imagination than a fly, thereby scoring her off unwittingly, for she has made the

very charge against him earlier in the play. The Barthwicks and their tribe use 'imagination' in special senses of their own—as synonymous with self-interest, prudence, foresight in safe-guarding one's property against possible attacks etc. Mrs. Barthwick's reply to her husband's cant about principles is significant; and we can take her interpretation of his usage of the word on trust.

Barthwick. (*Flustered*). I—I'm upset. From beginning to end the whole thing has been utterly against my principles.

Mrs. Barthwick. Rubbish! You haven't any! Your principles are nothing in the world but sheer—fright!"

Yes, she has hit the nail on the head: his principles are but another name for "fear of being talked about." It is worth while looking closer into the heart of what this Pharisee calls his principles. On principle, he would "make it a point of fixing responsibility for the disappearance of the silver box, for it goes to the foundations of security." On principle, he gets M^{rs}. Jones arrested, for it is "a question of justice" (Act I Sec. iii). His principles are further guided by his cant about social welfare. He tells his wife, who is too shrewd to swallow it all: "The representation of all parties is necessary for any proper social policy"; and further on, "the very essence of a liberal is to trust in the people;" but she, less addicted to camouflage, more accustomed to call a spade a spade, unmasks the liberal and presents him in his true colours:

Mrs. Barthwick. Now, John, eat your breakfast. As if there were any real difference between you

and the Conservatives. All the upper classes have the same interests to protect, and the same principles. (*Calmly*) Oh! You're sitting upon a volcano, John.

His advice to his wife: "Ah! You must be careful whom you speak to nowadays!" is an unconscious piece of self-revelation. But note his pose as a good Samaritan when he tells her "The lower classes are their own enemies. If they would only trust us they would get on much better." He makes the most politic use of his social sympathies when he adduces them as his reason for withdrawing the prosecution of the Jones, his real reason being, that the launching of it would involve, what he was most anxious to avoid—his son's appearance in Court. Nothing could be more opportune than the assumption of this generous gesture, as it would at once bring him credit for fellow-feeling and enable him to escape from a most awkward predicament; that is just the time to improve his liberalism :

Barthwick. (*Staring gloomily at Jack*). This prosecution goes very much against the grain with me. I have great sympathy with the poor. In my position I am bound to recognise the distress there is amongst them. The condition of the people leaves much to be desired. D' you follow me? I wish I could see my way to drop it."

Indeed, Barthwick knows how to make capital out of his sympathy for the poor in more ways than one!

He has a high opinion of his ability to conduct a judicial inquiry, and has no doubt of his infallible insight into character. His cross-examination of

Mrs. Jones, so astutely done in his own opinion, clinches his conviction of her guilt. "Remember that nobody is guilty until they are proved so," he tells his wife; he has proved it now to the hilt! He is a student of physiognomy too! Witness the little tip he gives his wife as to how she could distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor. "There's one very good rule—look at their eyes....If their eyes are starightforward I sometimes give them sixpence." (Act I se. ii). Another of his traits is a quiet irony; his circulating the decanter in religious imitation of the rising and setting of the Sun is characteristic. Barthwick is not, however, a heartless man. In the Police Court, when the case is on, we see him really anxious not to press the charge though it was too late. That little hesitation at the close, when Mrs. Jones turns to him with an entreaty, shows that he is not without a touch of humanity. Let us leave him at that.

Mrs. Barthwick is even more fiercely attached to property than her husband. To her there are only two classes, the 'haves' and the 'have-nots,' and the former must be ever on guard against the latter. A born hater of the poor, she wishes Jones to be severely punished. She would not trust her servants—"they are so secretive." Mr. Barthwick's Pecksniffian pretences to philanthropy are matched by his wife's prudishness. She mentions with warm approbation Mrs. Holyrood's dismissal of her servant for improper conduct, Mr. Barthwick characteristically asking whether the servant's behaviour got into the papers (Act II Se. ii). She is shocked by Mrs. Jones's allusion to her pre-marital relations with her husband in the presence of Mr. Barthwick and Jack. She

delivers a neat little sermon on truth and the importance of it in servants: "I hate people that can't speak the truth. (*Father and son exchange a look behind their port.*) It's just as easy to speak the truth as not. I've always found it easy enough etc." And it is this very woman that encourages her son to cover up his guilt with a barefaced lie! But we must make large allowance for the primitive mother feeling in her. A rascal—and yet her son! No wonder, she, a mother, so loving and so foolish, has spoiled him. Drink, debauchery, crime—she would pardon everything in him and defend him against the whole world; even his father must be cautious as to what he says of him in her presence. She is not particularly kind to the suffering poor. On hearing the moving cry of Jones' child she is in evident distress, and asks her husband to close the windows as the crying got on her nerves, but how we wish she did something to relieve the waif's misery! But we forget the saying of the Master about the camel and the needle's eye.

It is a great relief to turn from these bourgeois types to Mrs. Jones. Patient as Griselda, always calm and unperturbed, because schooled in sorrow, only on two occasions do we see her wrung with misery, once, when she finds the missing silver box with her husband, and later, when she hears the magistrate's conviction. Her sad self-possession does not desert her in the most trying ordeals, neither when, as a suspect, she is catechized by Barthwick nor when she is arrested by the policeman. She knows then that her children will come home to stare at the blank room and starve. It is a moment which might try saints. She is all

love to her husband though he has become more or less a curse to her. Not all the blows he has rained on her could put out her love for him. She has had to spend many a night in the streets as there was no staying with her husband in the same room. Victim as she is of his violence, she speaks of it and his hard drinking with the detachment and logical understanding of a social philosopher and the charity of a humanitarian. His marrying her itself was but a reluctant and belated reparation, under compulsion, for wrong done; and yet, his many savage ways do not evoke from her one word of hatred; but that he should hang about the houses in which she has work, shadow her, and ramp at her in odd corners, *that* she feels, would end in her being deprived of her work and her children of their bread. The thought goes like a knife to her heart. It is only then that, she feels like divorcing him, but at other moments she is forgiveness itself. The reader will remember how she recounts her miserable life to Marlow with impersonal aloofness and self-control. Her poverty is grinding, it being a problem with her every day how to keep her children's body and soul together. Life to her is a burden, and yet, her character shines triumphant over the tragedy of circumstance. Not a syllable of bitterness escapes her against the Barthwicks. All who can penetrate through the meretricious glamour of birth and state, discern true greatness even in vulgar clay and reverence it, will feel the moral beauty of this character. The reader will look on this picture and on that—Mrs. Barthwick and Mrs. Jones—and ponder over the 'strange cozenage' of the world's judgments. But there is a world where the last shall be first and the first shall be last.

Galsworthy has achieved something of a *tour de force* in *The Silver Box* and *Strife*. To transform a police court case and a strike, without any sex-interest in them, not into melodrama but into serious drama, marked by mastery of technique and subtle play of character—this, the alchemy of genius alone can achieve. *The Silver Box* grips us at once as the curtain rises, and unfolds the story infused with the moral, with consummate skill to the last, never losing the initial drive.

THE ELDEST SON, (1909).

The Eldest Son, another achievement in dramatic art, and a model of structural economy, has the same motif as *The Silver Box*—the dual standard of conduct maintained by 'Forsytes'. Sir William Cheshire, Matthew Arnold's 'barbarian' over again, gives his ultimatum to young Dunning, the under keeper either to marry the village girl, inferior to him in social rank, whose honour he has compromised, or to leave his service. It comes to light by a strange irony, the very next day, that Sir William's eldest son, Bill, has brought the housemaid, Freda Studdenham, to the same plight as the village girl's. But the law for Dunning cannot be the law for Sir William's own family. His son must not, on pain of being disinherited, marry the victim of his lust. The *mésalliance* would run away with prestige, 'traditions', and six centuries of pedigree! The unnerved knight asks his wife to dissuade the girl from such a match:

Sir William. Then why can't you go to the girl? She deserves no consideration. It's not a question of morality. *Morality le d—d!* (The *Italics* are ours).

Lady Cheshire. But not self-respect.

Sir William. What ! You're his mother !

Bill, though he is tired of the woman from whom he lightly stole his joys, has a sense of honour and refuses to behave like a cad. It is about to end disastrously for him when sturdy old Studddenham, the girl's father, who has a poor man's pride and self-respect, comes forward and relieves the situation : "Don't be afraid, Sir William ! We want none of you, She 'll not force herself where she is not welcome. She may ha' slipped her good name, but she 'll keep her proper pride. I 'll have no *charity marriage* in my family ;" and he proudly leads Freda out. Certainly he has more self-respect and honour than the whole Cheshire family who are brought face to face with him in this striking scene.

There are other excellent scenes in the play like those between Bill and Freda. Full of life, too, is the one in which the scintillating Dot conducts the rehearsal of *Caste*, though the title of the play points the moral too obviously. She is a lovable character, frank and sprightly, with a real heart, and reminds us of Joy. The character of Lady Cheshire is well conceived. Strong and delicate, she is affectionate to all including Freda, and is perhaps the most pleasing of Galsworthy's middle-class matrons. Of course the sense of caste is as deeply ingrained in her as in Sir William ; but she has an innate moral sense which does not seem to appeal to him. He is a typical aristocrat with the right degree of horror for socialists and radicals, a Philistine who would fight a *outrance* for class-domination and landocracy—one of those rich unemployed whom H. G. Wells calls 'wasters.'

A FAMILY MAN, (1921).

The play castigates the folly of Prussian methods in the home. In post-war atmosphere, when liberty has invaded even the hearth, such methods recoil on the domestic drill-sergeant himself. *A Family Man* is hence a satire on those who profess the principles of liberty and practise the principles of government wherever possible ; and as their wives and daughters are generally the most docile and submissive, they boss them, and are lessoned only by the nemesis. Such a man is John Builder, of the firm of Builder and Builder in a provincial town. 'His bearing has force and importance, as of a man accustomed to rising and ownerships, sure in his opinions, and not lacking in geniality when things go his way.'

One morning he finds that he is to be nominated Mayor of his town. "Not so bad at forty seven—h'm? I can make a thundering good Mayor. I can do things for myself that no body else can," we hear him tell his wife. In this exultant mood, he feels that he should be reconciled to his eldest daughter, Athene, who has quarrelled with him and stays away with her lover. The daughter's unconventional life and her living away from the family are a fly in the ointment of Builder's self-complacence. There is a fine ironic humour in the first scene, when Builder, inwardly cocksure of his fitness for the Mayor's place, dictates the insincere reply—his daughter, Maud, typing—that he is "reluctant to assume greater responsibilities but that he feels his duty to come forward in accordance with the Mayor's wish ; the honour is one of which he hardly feels himself worthy." At this stage Maud pulls him up: "Worthy. But you do, you know," and asks him to

say straightforwardly, "I know I'm the best man for the place," Builder replying, "The disrespect of you young people is something extraordinary."

He has brought up his children by the rod, which they have neither forgiven nor forgotten. And now the feeling of liberty in the air has gone into their blood like strong wine. Athene refuses to come back. Maud too would fend for herself and comes to her father to take leave of him. The family man (!) is in a parlous plight. A town Councillor, a Magistrate, and a Mayor next year—his foundations are rocking beneath him. "My God! I thought we were a Christian family," he cries, seizes her by the shoulders and shakes her vigorously. When he drops her she gets up, gives him a vicious look, and suddenly stamps her foot on his toe with all her might. The scene is interesting.

Builder. (*With a yell of pain*) You little devil!

Maud. (*Who has put the table between them*) I won't stand being shaken.

Builder. (*Staring at her across the table*) You've got my temper up and you'll take the consequences. I'll make you toe the line.

Maud. If you knew what a Prussian expression you've got!

Builder *passes his hand across his face uneasily, as if to wipe something off.*

Maud. No! It's too deep!

Builder. Are you my daughter or are you not?

Maud. I certainly never wanted to be. I've always disliked you, father, ever since I was so high, I've seen through you. Do you remember when you

used to come into the nursery because Jenny was pretty? You think we didn't notice that, but we did. And in the schoolroom—Miss Tipton. And d'you remember knocking our heads together? No, you don't, but we do. And—

Builder. You disrespectful monkey! Will you be quiet?

Maud. No; you've got to hear things. You don't really love anybody but yourself, father. What's good for you has to be good for everybody. I've often heard you talk about independence, but it's a limited company and you've got all the shares.

In Builder's study, nothing is ever studied except perhaps his face in the mirror; and in spite of the self-control imposed on him by his position, he is at heart eminently susceptible to feminine charm. He is now in high dudgeon, when his French housemaid, a coquette, enters, and tempts him to a dalliance, Builder yielding. Mrs. Builder chances to watch them kissing; her patience long tried, it is the last straw for her and she too declares off.

Builder has infinite faith in German methods. He tries to fetch his family back by force, when Maud pluckily ushers in a constable. In the tussle Builder gives him a black eye; the future Mayor is hauled up to the court and is tried by the Mayor in office. It is a humorous scene, not without pathos, for Builder is discovered storming like a caged tiger. His daughters, and Athene's lover whom he has insulted, are specially kind to him in the evidence they give in court.

Let off with a warning in view of his position, Builder comes home in high temper. His daughters

pity their father, now he is down, and come back to him with affection. Builder turns them out summarily ; writes an insulting letter to the Mayor ; and vehemently explodes on discipline to the editor of *The Comet*, who comes to consult him on the affair, and sends him away with a rebuff. Sick of himself and longing for a straw of solace, he bethinks himself of a lark with the French maid ; but she slips out of him. 'Not even a French maid,' he says bitterly. A paper-seller cries : Johnny Builder—beating his wife ! Dischawged !" Little urchins come to his window and cry "Johnny Builder !" "Oo blacked the copper's eye." Builder in an ungovernable passion seizes a small flower-pot and flings with all his force ; but it misses the target and the boy's voice is heard in the distance : Ya-a-ah ! missed ! " Later, in the evening, Builder phones to the editor, threatens him that he would sue him for defamation, and takes the galley slip about the case sent by the editor, tears it viciously across into many pieces, rams them into the envelope and sends it back post-haste to him.

It is night. Builder is sitting at the writing table, leaning his head on his hands. Three heads of boys are seen, as if decapitated, above the window sill. They cry : "Johnny Builder" ! Beaty Builder ! "Beat 'is wife-er !" The voices swell. In sheer choler and misery he takes the will and burns it, for he would cut off his children without a penny. When he is doing this his wife enters. His heart is touched, he takes her hand and squeezes it ; he tries to speak but does not succeed, and sits drawing at his pipe.

A delectable play, with a touch of farce, telling in every scene, the third act being masterly. In

this, the best of the lighter plays, *The Pigeon* excepted, pity, irony, and laughter are happily blended.

II

Old English and *The Forest* have no social idea behind them, but resuscitate sinister figures in the sphere of finance and business enterprise, throwing light on its dark corners.

OLD ENGLISH, (1924).

The play is the study of a type not uncommon in the mid- and late-Victorian business world, though seen only in stray survivals in the twentieth century—the hard-headed pagan, trained in the classics and marked by aesthetic tastes, who, dissolute, brutally cynical, and double-dealing, so hides his jobberies under an iron self-command, coolness of nerve, and composed manners, that he comes to be trusted and respected by society, and helps to form, when well-stricken in years, the tradition of “the grand old gentleman.” There is an inflexible spirit of independence in such men, seen in a quiet domineering, that is hardly discernible under their veneer of democratic form. They love to rule the roost, and heroically keep the flag of vice and roguery flying even in the jaws of death. Of such men is the octagenarian, Sylvanus Heythorp, nicknamed Old English, for nineteen years Chairman of the Island Navigation Company, who provides for his grandchildren (by his natural son) by means of a clever swindle, coolly exploiting, on the one side, the need of the ship-owner, Pillin, and on the other, the confidence reposed in him by the inexperienced section, that is, the majority, of shareholders. When one of his creditors, Ventnor, whom Heythorp has put off for thirteen

years, comes primed with evidence of the clandestine settlement on his grandchildren, and threatens disclosure in case he refused to pay his debt, the defiant old fox reviles him. Turning Ventnor out, he orders a dinner of his rich viands and strong liquors, takes his fill, and bravely lapses out of life. It is like Jonathan Wild on the scaffold, jauntily picking the pocket of the ordinary and carrying the cork-screw with him to the other world. Heythorp is not one of those who would in their last moments bid good-bye to "the reeling ape and faun." No believer he, in death-bed repentance!

Heythorp is of the same kidney as Bishop Nicholas of Ibsen's *The Pretenders*. A fraud, with knowledge of the classics and artistic sensibilities, he reminds us of Renaissance villains of the type of the Bishop ordering his tomb at St. Praexed's, in Browning's poem. His quiet blackguardism reminds us of the surprise that Napoleon sprang on his victims, like Duc D' Enghien. *Toujours de l'audace*¹ and *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*² are his mottoes. "*Aequam memento rebus in arduis servare mentem*"³ is the line he loves most from his Horace. He warns his grand-daughter, Phyllis—in spite of her tinsel attractiveness, a chip of the old block—against fellows like Bob Pillin "with no sand in them:"

Heythorp. (*He pats her cheek*) Mind! Chaps like that little-headed pup in there—not for you, All the same mould, no drive, no vices—nothing. Thinks himself a spark. Why! at his age I'd broken my neck, winged a Yankee, been drowned for a

1. Always the audacious.

2. There are no backward steps.

3. In times of adversity remember to preserve equanimity.

bet, and lost my last bob on the Derby"—which illuminates his fastest days as by a flash. And the grand-daughter, lost in admiration for her heroic ancestor, exclaims: "Had you, Guardy? How lovely!" The family rascality runs in her blood as well as in her brother's. She admires men most when the brute is up in them; she almost loves Bob Pillin when he had "quite a nice glare in his eyes and shouts to Ventnor, 'out you go! One, two—and out he did go.'" But, she wishes Ventnor hadn't, as then Bob could have knocked him down." The stock never dies!

Talking to his body-servant a couple of hours before his death, in a reminiscent mood, Heythorp recalls Jenny Lind, Mario, Grisi, Lablache, and the great days of opera, and the actors, Kemble, Power, Little Robson and Edmund Kean. He does not care for latter day singers and actors nor for modern novelists. He is haunted by the glorious days when he was a topping swell:

Heythorp. All four-in-hands then, tandems, gigs—drove my own cab—tiger behind.

Meller. Those were little boys, weren't they, Sir?

Heythorp. Little rascals in boots--blue liveries—tight as a drum. Cremorne—Star and Garter. Wet sheet and a flowing tide. Great days!

He is not unredeemed by touches of humanity. He has some feeling for his servant, Meller; but his affections are reserved mostly for the fair sex, and among them for the more beautiful. He gives a sovereign by way of present to his housemaid.

but his most human moments are when his granddaughter stands near, doting on him.

Turning, as it does, a search-light on obscure corners of human character, *Old English* cannot yet be called a pleasant play.

THE FOREST, (1924).

It is the year of grace, 1898. Relations between England and the Boers are strained. A quartette of British politicians—Lord Elderleigh, member of the Bible League, Stanforth, editor of a Liberal paper, Pole Revers of the Foreign Office, and Robert Beton, Imperialist—are assembled in the sanctum of a financier in London, named Adrian Bastaple. Vague rumours have reached England that the Belgians in Congo are carrying on slave trade.* Elderleigh and Stanforth are enthusiasts of anti-slave-trade campaign and they have come to enlist Bastaple's financial support for their humane cause. They would subsidise an expedition through Central Africa to investigate traces of slave-trade on the Congo border and they have found a handy instrument in the African explorer, Strood. Beton, the Imperialist, does not care a straw for lime-light on the slave-traffic. He is for redeeming, by means of coolie labour, large tracts in South Africa to provide an outlet for the congested home population. The swarm and push of the Central African forest, with its frightful riot of vitality, without

*Exaggerated rumours of atrocious cruelties practised by the Belgians on the Congo natives also reached England. The British Government reported the conduct of the Belgian officials to the world, which evoked loud protests in Europe and America. It was believed, however, that in doing so, Britain herself, having in view the ultimate extension of her control over the Congo regions, was actuated not altogether by humane motives.

aim or end, is nothing, he believes, by the side of the cut-throat competition at home—"the ghastly, teeming struggle of swarm of human ants coming in over the bridges, overworked, and stoop-shouldered," is a sight to give one a nightmare. So he would keep the anti-slave-trade propaganda in full blast, and utilize it as a red-herring to quiet down opposition to his own coolie labour project. Bastaple generously contributes a ten thousand to the anti-slave-trade movement after a private understanding with Beton that the money is really for the coolie labour business, and asks him accordingly to wire his secret instructions to Strood.

Finance, to Bastaple, is an exciting game—the be-all and end-all of his life. All his money is invested in "South African Concessions." Bastaple's only aim in financing the coolie labour scheme is to boom up the shares by making the "Concessions" popular, and sell them when they are at a high premium. Beton's scheme is therefore a good stalking-horse behind which Bastaple could rig the financial world. Beton, who has exploited Elderleigh and Stanforth is this exploited in turn by Bastaple. The financier converts two-thirds of his investments into dummies (that is shares not held in his name) and makes ready to tack his course to the veering breeze.

An adventurer in Central Africa, Strood would stick at nothing in compassing his ends. He has had the money and the orders of these London faddists—the orders from Elderleigh and Stanforth being at cross-purposes with those from Beton. But he has a purpose and an objective of his own, namely, to cut through Central Africa, covered with forest and marsh, and peopled by deadly cannibals, to reach

the diamond-fields on the Kasai river, and make a discoverer's claim. By fraud and unscrupulous exercise of force, he pushes ahead, but, before reaching his destination, meets his death at the hands of the Arab girl, Amina, whom he has treacherously inveigled into the expedition. Strood's venture thus ends in a fiasco.

It is eight months since the caravan financed by Bastaple started on its ill-starred mission. The financier has juggled with human lives. And those who have not actually perished, worthy men like Dr. Franks, deceived into joining the expedition by the anti-slave-trade hoax, have been subjected to unimaginable sufferings in the terrible forest.

From a Belgian baron, bribed with promise of a loan to a shipping scheme, Bastaple gets secret information, earlier than the papers, about the impasse between Milner and Kruger in the Transvaal and about the impending war. Once the war began, Bastaple's shares would fetch nothing in the market. From Dr. Franks, who was stricken down with fever in the forest and allowed to escape home, Bastaple learns that the real object of Strood was to discover the diamond-fields on the borders of Portuguese West Africa. But when Franks tells him that the expedition has most probably perished, Bastaple pretends to disbelieve it; "for Strood,—who knows?—might have succeeded in his object." Meanwhile, he learns that the coolie labour scheme has been turned down by the meeting. South African shares are sagging rapidly. But the wily financier is weather-wise and well used to troubled waters. By means of cryptic messages to Portuguese papers—for they must know, before others, of a discovery near their own West

African Colony—he contrives to fake up a false report that Strood has discovered new-diamond fields; with the result that the South African shares soar at once. Bastaple sells off his dummy shares, makes a mint of money, gives a princely present to his secretary, who has been the instrument of his dirty work, and doubles his charities !

The play falls into two sharp divisions. No two set of scenes could be more contrasted in tone, interest, and atmosphere, than the forest scenes and those which take us to the financier's sanctum in London. The story of Herrick and Amina, and of her revenge on Strood, reads like a chapter from a thrilling book of romance, say, by Kipling or by Rider Haggard, or like the tales of Rajput chivalry. For the naturalist, Herrick, who loves a special variety of monkey even more than he does the woman who clings to him with pathetic love though slighted and discarded, we feel a sort of contempt. "Queer thing, colour," he says, "Suppose I shall never see that girl again; find I have'nt half the feeling for her I'd have for a dog. Got room in that chest for this bottle? My frog; don't want to lose him. Quaint chap, isn't he?" Amina, simple and yet astute, passionate in love as implacable in hate, is a typical Arab; and so is her brother. The unscrupulous Strood who rules his caravan with a rod of iron, administering forest law among them, is a counterpart of the respectable London villain, Bastaple himself. They represent two modern types, it is difficult to say which is more repulsive. The London idealist and politicians are tools in their hands. Their ways may differ, but their work is the same—playing ducks and drakes with human lives. Men like General

Dyer of the Punjab atrocities and Eyre of Jamaica belong to the Strood type. The forest itself in which nothing is so ugly as "the visible, selfish rush towards the sky, the uproar of the rush, and the fierce heartless jostling and trampling"—Nature red in tooth and claw—is an emblem of men like Bastable and Strood.

The forest scenes are faithful to geography and to the accounts given by the famous explorer, Stanley. We have failed, however, to ferret out the name, Bate-tala even in standard works. The Arabs, Amina and Sahmeda, and the story of romantic love between an English naturalist and a half-cast Arab girl, though imaginary, are true to oriental character. They are, however, welcome encroachments of romance on realism.

CHAPTER VI.

PLAYS GLANCING AT INTERNATIONAL AND
RACIAL JUSTICE: *THE MOB*; *LOYALTIES*.

THE MOB, (1914).

THE *Mob*, though ostensibly a tragedy, is, from the spiritual point of view, a comedy of political idealism triumphing in the self-devotion and martyrdom of the hero, Stephen More. England has declared war against a small country in the East, inhabited by wild mountaineers who fiercely love independence. What should have caused the war? In seeking to cow down some of the tribes in the interior, John Bull provoked them to fury, with the result that the incensed natives murdered two or three Englishmen. The jingoistic cry is set up at once in England that the prestige of the Empire is at stake. "Down with the savages! Erase their country from the map. The enemy shall have no quarter!" is the slogan. The whole country begins to thrill with war-fever. Even those who have regarded the war as unjust deem it their solemn duty to change their view, now that the country has declared war. The dearest relations and friends of Stephen More M. P. have gone to the front, laying down their lives in country's cause. His own father-in-law, Sir John Julian, a veteran who has grown grey in the defence of the Empire, is in the Cabinet. At the opening of the drama we find his friends and kith and kin pleading and remonstrating with More, protesting, and imploring him not to set his face against the war. A deputation of More's

constituents waits on him asking him to go back on his impossible attitude,—all to no purpose. He has made up his mind about the unrighteous character of the war; and he would not, for the life of him, rest content with keeping his counsel to himself. He must unbosom himself in Parliament, tell the people from Land's End to John O'Groat's that they have taken an iniquitous step from which they ought to recede. If their boast that the British Empire is the custodian of liberty and justice, of the best sentiments of mankind, meant anything. "We have arrogated to our land," says More, "the title, 'Champion of Freedom', 'Foe of Oppression'. Is that indeed a by-gone glory? Is it not worth some sacrifice of our pettier dignity, to avoid laying another stone upon its grave; to avoid placing before the searchlight-eyes of History the spectacle of yet one more piece of national cynicism? We are about to force our will and our dominion on a race that has always been free, that loves its country, and its independence, as much as we love ours. I cannot sit silent to-night and see this begin. As we are tender of our own land so should we be of the lands of others. I love my country. It is because I love my country that I raise my voice. Warlike in spirit these people may be—but they have no chance against ourselves. And war on such, however agreeable to the blind moment, is odious to the future. The great heart of mankind ever beats in sense and sympathy with the weaker. It is against this great heart of mankind that we are going. In the name of Justice and Civilization we pursue this policy; but by Justice we shall hereafter be judged, and by Civilization—condemned."

He stumps it through the country with the result that every respectable man points a finger of scorn at

him. Excepting his loyal clerk, Steel, who is true to his name, his most devoted followers rat him. His loving wife and his darling child, Olive, bid him farewell. None will have part or lot with him. He is one against a jeering world. The pack, in full cry at his back, hoots him down as a freak of nature, and delts him with orange peels; ragged little boys spit on him. Nothing daunted, More pursues his tragic mission of convincing an insensate mob. The end is not far off. More is mobbed and victimised.

"A large spring is just breaking. Against trees in leaf and blossom, with the houses of a London Square beyond, suffused by the spreading glow, is seen a dark life-size statue on a granite pedestal. In front is the broad, dust-dim pavement. The light grows till the central words around the pedestal can be clearly read :

Erected to the Memory of Stephen More
"Faithful to his ideal".

High above, the face of More looks straight before him with a faint smile. On one shoulder, and on his bare head two sparrows have perched, and from the gardens behind come the twittering and singing of birds."

It is the way with the multitude : they crown their hero with thorns when he is alive and burn incense at his shrine when he is gone.

The scene in which the rabble bait More is graphic and convincing :

Tall Youth. (*With lank black hair under a bowler hat*) You blasted traitor !

More faces round at the volley of jeering that follows ; the chorus of boing swells, then gradually dies as if they realized that they were spoiling their own sport.

A rough girl. Don't frighten the poor feller!
A girl beside her utters a shrill laugh.

Steel. (*Tugging at More's arm*) Come along, sir.

More. (*Shaking his arm free to the crowd*) Well, what do you want?

A Voice. Speech.

More. Indeed! That's new.

Rough Voice. (*At the back of the crowd*) Look at his white liver. You can see it in his face.

A big navvy. (*In front*) Shut it! Give 'im a chanst!

Tall Youth. Silence for the blasted traitor?

A youth plays the concertina, there is laughter, then an abrupt silence. etc. etc.

Of delicate beauty is the little passage in which Katherine, More's wife, appeals to him in the name of their glad days of young love to revise his opinion:

Katherine. Do you remember that day on our honeymoon, going up Ben Lawers? You were lying on your face in the heather; you said it was like kissing a loved woman. There was a lark—you said that was the voice of one's worship. The hills were very blue; that's why we had blue here, because it was the best dress of our country. You do love her.

More. Love Her!

Katherine. You'd have done this for me—then.

More. Would you have asked me—then, Kit?

In Olive we have a remarkable study of the child-mind. A child's curiosity and wonder; the naive solutions it finds for problems agitating grown-up men;

its occasional mock-seriousness; its sudden impulse to fun and frolic; the sly pranks; its trustful love and quaint innocence; its sensitive response to external sensations and atmosphere; its irrepressible glee; its wheedling and charming pettishness; its moving call to friendship and laughter; its generosity and sympathy towards the poor, are all captured in their fine and fugitive gleams by Galsworthy in the scenes in which Olive appears.

The hero as well as the inner idea of this play recall closely those of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, Stephen More being almost a double of Dr. Stockmann, without his abounding good humour. *The Mob* is an unconscious adaptation of Ibsen's play.

The play is not historically true, inasmuch as there has been no British politician who wore camel's hair, went about rousing the conscience of his country in a matter of imperial justice, and was martyred in the attempt. But it has a deeper truth than historical. It drives home the melancholy fact in British politics that the politician, who rises superior to the atmosphere of chauvinism, and exhorts Britishers, when it is a question of vested interests, of expediency, or of Britain *vs* coloured races, to translate their ideals of justice and fair-play into action, is destined to find himself, if not exactly, like More, in the minority of one, in the minority of a despised handful. *The Mob* is an *exposé* of the hollowness of catchwords glibly uttered by politicians when they are not called on to act up to them. These same men who indulge in lip-service to the ethics of Empire—talk the biggest rhetoric about imperial responsibility and the rest of it—treat with utter contempt those who take these ideals seriously. To such men *The Mob* would be very unpleasant reading.

LOYALTIES, (1922).

What interests us most in this play is not its problem, but a special case of conduct—the psychology of Captain Dancy's crime. Young Captain Dancy returns home with a D. S. O. after rendering valiant service in the war, only to vegetate at home, for want of that adventure which is bred in his bone. Married four months, there is no more loving couple than Mabel and he. Earning less at home and finding himself hard up, he sells off his mare, Rosemary,—which he thought to be a weed that was eating its head off—to a wealthy Jew, his neighbour, living in the same house. De Levis, for that is the Jew's name, sells the filly to a bookie for a thousand pounds, whereupon Dancy begins to feel that he has a right to the money as the animal was after all his! At this time, an Italian wine merchant has been pressing him to compensate his daughter with a thousand pounds, Dancy having had a liaison with her before his marriage. The merchant has threatened that in default of such a settlement, he would disclose the matter to his wife. Loving Mabel well, Dancy dreads the disclosure. Exactly the amount that the Italian wants is with the Jew. If only he could get it! If he stole the money it would only be looting a looter. Long bored with ennui, Dancy has also been chafing for adventure. To take a double leap from his own balcony to the Jew's and back—ah! that would be something like life. Other thoughts also incite him to the deed. Having taken a standing jump on to a bookcase, four feet high, for a wager, he has won a tenner of De Levis, who has later on, jeered at Dancy for 'parlour tricks'. Dancy also feels that De Levis

thinks him a fool for having so lightly disposed off his splendid mare. He wishes to be revenged on De Levis for all this. The opportunity offers itself when the latter locks his room and goes away for a bath, Dancy making the leap and stealing the notes in his absence. Returning and missing his money, De Levis informs his landlord about the theft. The police is called and the regular enquiries made, but the theft remains a mystery, not however to De Levis himself, who, putting two and two together, shrewdly suspects Dancy. When he hints his suspicions his neighbours are horrified. They would never believe it of Dancy, whom they have known for years as a man of sterling character. Dancy himself denies flatly all knowledge of the money. A few days pass, and the suspicion in De Levis' mind, who has put the links together, growing to a certainty, he ventilates it in the Jockey Club. Its other members, Lord St. Erth and Major Colford, expostulate with him and adjure him to withdraw his allegation, for what did he gain by utterly ruining the character of one of its respected members and sullying the reputation of the club itself? If De Levis refused to recant and apologize, they would blackball him from their clubs—let him beware! They call Dancy, who, unable to reconcile the inconsistencies in his statements, with which De Levis confronts him, crowns his guilt by calling the latter 'a damned Jew'. But the clubmen, all friends of the Christian, and none of the Jew, advise Dancy to clear his name in a Court of Law. The next morning, with inimitable effrontery and *sang froid*, Dancy asks De Levis to sign an apology he has penned for him, but the latter only reaffirms the charge. Words follow, and almost blows, Dancy putting the coping stone on his insults by calling

the Jew a swine. And what is more astonishing, encouraged by his innocent wife, he files a suit against De Levis for defamation! In the course of the case the missing notes are traced and Dancy is found to be the culprit. He comes to his wife, makes a clean breast of his crime and bids her cease loving him. Nothing can be more touching than the devotion of this faithful creature.

Dancy. Forgive me!

Mabel. (*Putting her hand on his head*) Yes; oh, yes! I think I've known a long time, really. Only why? What made you?

Dancy. (*Getting up and speaking in jerks*) It was a crazy thing to do; but, damn it. I was only looting a looter. The money was as much mine as his. A decent chap would have offered me half. You didn't see the brute look at me that night at dinner as much as to say: "You blasted fool!" It made me mad. That wasn't a bad jump—twice over. Nothing in the war took quite such nerve. (*Grimly*) I rather enjoyed that evening.

Mabel. But—money! To keep it!

Dancy. (*Sullenly*) Yes, but I had a debt to pay.

Mabel. To a woman?

Dancy. A debt of honour—it wouldn't wait.

Mabel. It was—it *was* to a woman, don't lie any more.

Dancy. (*Grimly*) Well! I wanted to save your knowing. I'd promised a thousand. I had a letter from her father that morning, threatening to tell you. All the same, if that tyke hadn't jeered at me for parlour tricks!—But what's the good of all this

now? (*Sullenly*) Well—it may cure you of loving me. Get over that, Mab; I never was worth it—and I'm done for!

Mabel. The woman—have you—since—?

Dancy. (*Energetically*) No! You supplanted her. But if you'd known I was leaving a woman for you, you'd never have married me. (*He walks over to the hearth*).

Mabel *too gets up. She presses her hands to her forehead, then walks blindly round to behind the sofa and stands looking straight in front of her.*

Mabel. (*Coldly*) What has happened, exactly?

Dancy. Sir Frederic chucked up the case. I've seen Twisden; they want me to run for it to Morocco.

Mabel. To the war there?

Dancy. Yes. There's to be a warrant out.

Mabel. A prosecution? Prison? Oh, go! Don't wait a minute! Go!

Dancy. Blast them!

Mabel. Oh, Ronny! Please! Please! Think what you'll want. I'll pack. Quick! No! Don't wait to take things. Have you got money?

Dancy. (*Nodding*) This'll be good-bye, then!

Mabel. (*After a moment's struggle*) Oh! No! No, no! I'll follow—I'll come out to you there.

The inspector's knock is heard, Dancy leaves her and goes into the bed-room. The poor woman cries piteously to the inspector to give them but half an hour in which to make their escape, but to no purpose, for the inspector is true to his duty. He knocks at the bed-room. A pistol shot is heard—Dancy is no more.

The diverse loyalties of men envelop the central action of this play. The Jew has to fight, one against the world, almost every one of his acquaintances regarding him as a social nuisance. Major Colford is against him, because he would never give away his old friend and brother-officer, even if he were guilty : he is loyal to friendship and to his country. Lord St. Erth is against him, for he is loyal to the club. Miss Orme is against him for would stand by her kinsman (Dancy being her third cousin) to the last. The grocer, Gilman, would be glad to see him down, for the jews, though persevering, sober, and honest, are so prosperous ! Loyalties are also shown to cut up against each other. We find this conflict especially in General Canynge (and in a lesser degree, in Winsor and Lady Adela also) whose loyalty to truth, over-masters loyalty to friendship and the army. Then, there is the upright lawyer, Twisden, thoroughly loyal to law, who would never allow it to become procuress to injustice. The Jew himself, a black sheep in the eyes of his Christian fellowmen, shrewd, resolute, and fearless to the last, is shown to be the real Christian. There is not even a distant tinge of self-righteousness in his forgiveness of Dancy :

De Levis. I wanted you to realise it's not my doing. I'll give it no support. I'm content. I don't want my money. I don't even want costs. Dancy, do you understand ?

Dancy does not answer, but looks at him with nothing alive in his face but his eyes.

Twisden. We are obliged to you, Sir. It was good of you to come.

De Levis. (*With a sort of darting pride*) Don't mistake me. I didn't come because I feel Christian; I am a Jew. I will take no money—not even that which was stolen. Give it to a charity. I'm proved right. And now I'm done with the damned thing. Good morning!

We must remember, however, that it was his gibe at at Dancy that made him first think of revenge, and later on whetted it. That a Jew should mock at him was too much for him to brook.

CHAPTER VII.

PLAYS OF CHARACTER : *JOY* ; *ABIT O' LOVE*.

JOY. (1907).

UNLIKE the other plays, *Joy* turns, not on a central idea or problem, but on the personal relation between a mother and daughter, in the distressing situation, that the mother, still young and beautiful, has a lover, whom the daughter, dotingly fond of her mother and not yet initiated into that sovereign passion, heartily hates. Mrs. Gwyn has been living some years as a grass widow, separated from a husband whom she had long ceased to love. Their daughter, Joy, maiden of sweet seventeen, is staying with her uncle and aunt, the Hopes, away in their country-home near Oxford. In her loneliness, the mother has chanced on a certain Maurice Lever, one of the managing directors of a bogus Mexican gold mine. robust, handsome, and of easy conscience. She is so far 'gone on him' that he has become her fate. She cannot think of life without him. But this intimacy, though well-concealed from Joy, shocks and eats into her heart, for marriage to her is sacred and inviolable. She thinks, therefore, of her mother's new friendship as a foul blot on their name; and of the man, as an interloper come to rob her of a dear mother's love. Mrs. Gwyn, feeling as days pass on, that Lever and herself should no longer continue in that false position, makes up her mind, one midsummer morning, to go to her loving uncle and reconcile them, and most of all, Joy, to the rela-

tion in which she and Lever stood. And further, her uncle, Col. Hope, stands to gain by becoming friends with Lever, for he could then double his wealth by taking shares in the Mexican gold mine.

Joy, in her uncle's home, is on the tiptoe of expectation. For she loves her mother with a mystic passion. But her rapturous delight and frenzied eagerness receive a sudden chill by the sight of Lever approaching along with her mother as a comet. The day wears on, Joy alternating between fits of love towards the mother and paroxysms of hate towards the man, until it comes to a crisis in the evening, when by chance Joy overhears the talk between the lovers. Simple-hearted Col. Hope is drawn to invest a two thousand in the rotten gold mine. Lever tells his beloved, under the rose, that he is precluded from revealing the truth about the mine to her uncle, not only by reason of its being a business secret, but also because the divulgence would make him out a swindler in the good man's eyes; and he wants her, too, not to disclose the truth to him, as she would be giving him away in trying to save her uncle. Catching this part of the conversation, Joy makes up her mind to unmask the villain, rescue her uncle from his machination, and rid her mother of his poisonous shadow. The daughter confronts the mother with the dastardly character of the man who possesses her. Mrs. Gwyn is torn between conflicting feelings. The mother-heart says: "Renounce the lover, let not the child's life wither away;" merciless Love says on the other hand; "Renounce at your peril; if you do, you end in the sear and yellow leaf." The mother does not understand the secret of the daughter's hatred towards the man; the daughter, the secret of the mother's

love; and thereof come searchings and burning of heart. That good creature, Miss Beech, puts it with profound insight: "They must go their own ways, poor things! She can't put herself in the child's place, and the child can't put herself in Molly's. A woman and a girl—there is the tree of life between them." The duologue between Mrs. Gwyn and Miss Beech reveals the former's lacerated heart:

Mrs. Gwyn. I'm so dragged in two (*She sinks into a chair*) I knew it most come.

Miss Beech. Does she know everything, Molly?

Mrs. Gwyn. She guesses.

Miss Beech. (*Mournfully.*) It's either him or her then, my dear; one or the other you'll have to give up.

Mrs. Gwyn. (*Motionless.*) Life's very hard on women?

Miss Beech. Life's only just beginning for that child, Molly.

Mrs. Gwyn. You don't care if it ends for me!

Miss Beech. Is it as bad as that?

Mrs. Gwyn. Yes.

Miss Beech. (*Rocking her body*) Poor things! Poor things!

Each is for herself and not for the other—and hence the alternative title of the comedy: "A play on the letter 'I'".

We must now hark back a little. For some months past, a lad from Oxford, a friend of the Hopes, has been wooing Joy in the teeth of rebuffs numberless. Having weathered successfully her flighty moods he is today within sight of his haven of joy, which appears to the heroic mariner to be still far off.

It is the day of days to poor Dick, for Joy is to leave the Hopes with her mother on the morrow. Joy's face is clouded because of Lever. In the evening, after meeting her mother, she sinks down stricken near the hollow tree—the scene of such vicissitudes in the lives of this drama—where Dick finds her. The sorrow of the beloved is the lover's opportunity. The idyll of love that follows teaches Joy the mysterious force of that master-passion which sways hearts the as the west-wind does the forest. Learning love, she learns also to understand what appeared to her as her mother's stubborn callousness, to pardon the man who seemed to come as a upas-shadow on their innocent lives, and to accept the satire of love's circumstance. Hate has turned into love.

The story is admirably developed and brought on to a resolution as beautiful as it is moral. Even more striking is the exquisite keeping of the charming picture of a middle-class home on a leisurely summer day, far from the madding crowd. A spirit of tranquillity broods over the whole scene. Joy concealing herself amidst the foliage of the tree so that her newly done-up coiffure may not be noticed; Miss Beech hiding the paint-pot of worms to let off the 'poor creatures'; the good Colonel, heated by discussion with his son-in-law, and maintaining, with the fulminatory vehemence of a politician fighting out a grave national issue, that the tennis-ball was not out; the domestic economy of Mrs. Hope, much exercised as to whom to consign to the blue room and the company of earwigs; Dick's desperate concern for what a lover's fears diagnose as Joy's neuralgic headache, and his naive remedy of *eau de Cologne*; these and other little touches vindicate

the truth and vividness with which the dramatist has visualized to us the noiseless tenour of a rural holiday. Galsworthy's keen eye has penetrated to the really dramatic beneath the humdrum—or rather, vitalized it with interest and meaning. Like Defoe, he has the wonderful art of “forging the hand-writing of Nature” and of “lying like truth”; but he has also what Defoe had not, the poet's power of discerning and inweaving fairy threads of humour and pathos that endow the web of his plays with chatoyant lustre. He does not resort to far-fetched themes to secure a telling climax.

The main characters of this play are live to the core. Joy is verily a sprite of joy, high-strung, loving, and earnest, though her sweet nature is jarred by the disgusting presence of Lever. She is all the more lovable for her sly girlish ways and playful frowns. Filial affection reigns so strong in her that she finds it easy to starve the new-sprung emotion of love; more girl than woman, her love does not grow into a passion until the day wears to evensong. Before this elemental affection for her mother, love appears at first profane; but at the end of the day, one love feeds another. It is often said that love is a sudden, flaming passion: “Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?” is a well-worn line. Joy is one of those queer creatures who encourage their lovers by discouraging them—with whom indifference is but the mask of secret longing. But the dear deceit drops away, and the human asserts itself at the end of this midsummer day's dream; for, during the day, liking grows to fancy, and fancy to love; between Dick and Joy it is not a case of love at first sight.

Less finely individualized than Joy is Miss Beech. Her heart is a well of goodness. She would not literally harm a worm if she could help it. Nor would she, to save a worm, offend a friend—which is wiser. Humanity, jealously concealed from others by a genial irony, always at her command, is her distinguishing trait. She is the one person in the play who understands, and understanding, sympathizes with all. Lever, Colonel and Mrs. Hope, Mrs. Gwyn, Joy, Dick—she has probed them all to their bottom, and often disconcerts them at odd moments by interjecting snips of irony calculated to reveal them to themselves. She is thus the *raisonneur* of the play. The reader might remember her exclaiming ‘special case’ to make Col. Hope realise that he was measuring himself by one standard and others by another. Similarly, she reminds Ernest Blunt that while he accused Colonel Hope of being unable to take an impersonal view of things, he is himself liable to the charge. Her words and gestures are instinct with a kindly, ironic humour. In Mrs. Gwyn’s moment of trial, when accused by her of bitterness, Miss Beech does not shrink from bringing home to her the egotistic nature of the consolation she allows herself. There is a maternal kindness in her words, though they are of an external monitor.

But the person who grips us most is Col. Hope—indeed a delightful blend of an old-world sense of hospitality and honour, generosity, and affection, amiable self-importance and naive simplicity. He takes rank with Parson Adams and Uncle Toby. How droll he is when, having flown into a temper, he asks the cool Blunt to be cool ! He reminds us then of Sheridan’s Sir Anthony Absolute.

More humorous is that other scene of fine dramatic irony, in which the good Colonel, all ignorant of Mrs. Gwyn's real malady—one of the heart—attributes it to her anxiety about Joy's headache, attributing the headache itself to chronic neuralgia, excitement about her mother's coming, Mrs. Hope's worrying her about the frock, constitutional excitability, indeed, to everything as far remote from the case as chalk from cheese. On the top of all, he tells 'Peachey' (Miss Beech) that she does not understand Mrs. Gwyn at all. And when Mrs. Gwyn cries in the pang of her trial: "Don't, uncle Tom"!, he continues with innocent garrulity, patting her hand: "There, there, old girl, don't think about it. She'll be all right tomorrow." Later on he unwittingly pours salt on the poor woman's heart-wound when he goes off at a tangent:

Colonel. (*Fidgeting.*) Well, if you're thinking of morphia for her, don't have anything to do with it. I've always set my face against morphia; the only time I took it was in Burmah. I'd raging neuralgia for two days. I went to our old doctor, and I made him give me some. "Look here, doctor," I said, "I hate the idea of morphia, I've never taken it, and I never want to."

The intermingled pathos and humour of this speech, is so natural and effortless, that it reminds us of that famous scene in *Tristram Shandy* where Uncle Toby, not knowing that Lieut. Le Fevre lies cold in death, walks tiptoe to his bed, and gently removing the curtains, breathlessly rains on the dead man a hundred anxious enquiries about his health, without pausing for a reply. Sterne's scene is unsurpassed for its pathos-bedewed humour.

Colonel Hope's speech recalling it only remotely. Simple to the extent of gullibility, Col. Hope has an exaggerated sense of his own shrewdness and knowledge of men and business. He feels his superiority to his wife so much in this respect, that if she advises him to adopt one course he would adopt just the opposite. It is so amusing to watch him poring over the maps with the pompous air of a man who knows everything about the mining business—as if he were the last man who would allow himself to be trapped into a bubble venture! And parading his knowledge of the world and matters geological, he declaims: "Ah! Experts! No faith in them never had! Miners, lawyers, theologians, cowardly lot—pays them to be cowardly. When they haven't their own axes to grind they've got their theories; a theory's a dangerous thing. (*He loses himself in contemplation of the papers.*) Now *my* theory is, you're in strata here of what we call the Triassic Age." He forgets that he has just then denounced theorizers. The emphasis on '*my*' is also significant. He has already told Mrs. Gwyn that it was his experience never to trust too much to a man who has to do with mining. Elsewhere he tells Miss Beech that she doesn't know human nature. *He* knows it! and therefore invests a two thousand in the mining concern. If further proof of his economic wisdom were wanted one has only to think of his having invested all his money in the 3% India Stock!

He is often visited by sentimental moods of reminiscence, in which he re-lives his youthful days when Nell was a jolly girl and himself a romantic lover. He has a very soft corner for her. "There's your aunt," he tells Mrs. Gwyn, "she's very funny, but

if there's anything the matter with me, she'll sit up all night ; but when she's ill herself, and you try to do anything for her, out she raps at once." Only he would not listen to her in business matters in which he is such an expert ! He has, again, his poetic moods, as when he goes into flights of unbought poetry about the moon (p. 74).

The dramatist is reluctant to dismiss him and keeps him, Miss Beech, Joy and Dick, obviously his favourite characters in the play, to the very last. Towards the close, the Colonel sallies out of his house with a pair of field-glasses to survey the moon and bursts into characteristic domestic eloquence about their quality. His childlike surprise and wonder on glimpsing the young lovers is so charming, his delight in the young couple's happiness so pure and so genuine, that we seem to catch the infection of his good nature :

"I say—is it one of the maids ?—the baggage ! Why ! It's Dick ! By George, she's got her hair down, Peachy ! It's Joy !

(Miss Beech goes to look. He makes as though to hand the glasses to her, but puts them to his own eyes, instead excitedly.)

It is ! What about her headache ? By George they're kissing. I say, Peachey ! I shall have to tell Nell !

Miss Beech. Are you sure they're kissing ? Well that's some comfort.

Colonel. They're at the stile now. Oughtn't I to stop them, eh ? *(He stands on tiptoe.)* We mustn't spy on them, dash it all. *(He drops the glasses.)* Yes, he could not rest until he shared his delight

with his dear Nell! His unwillingness to spy on the young couple is characteristic. It reveals in him an innate sense of honour which raises him far above anything that might even remotely smack of meanness.

Charming too are the scenes of young love between Joy and Dick; but the scene of grip and power is another—the one between Mrs. Gwyn and Joy:

Joy, (*covering her face*). I'm—I'm ashamed.

Mrs. Gwyn. I brought you into the world; and you say that to me? Have I been a bad mother to you?

Joy. (*In a smothered voice*.) Oh! mother.

Mrs. Gwyn. Ashamed? am *I* to live all my life like a dead woman because you're ashamed? Am I to live like the dead because you're a child that knows nothing of life?...D'you think—because I suffered when you were born and because I've suffered since with every ache you ever had, that gives you the right to dictate to me now? (*In a dead voice*.) 'v'e been unhappy enough, and I shall be unhappy enough in the time to come. (*Meeting the hard wonder in Joy's face*.) Oh! you untouched things, you're as hard and cold as iron.

Joy. I would do anything for *you* mother.

Mrs. Gwyn. Except—let me live, Joy. That's the only thing you won't do for me, I quite understand.

Joy. (*In a despairing whisper*). But it's wrong of you—it's wicked!

Mrs. Gwyn. If it's wicked, I shall pay for it, not *you*.

Joy. But I want to save you, mother !

Mrs. Gwyn. Save me ? (*Breaking into laughter.*)

Joy. I can't bear it that you—if you'll only—I'll never leave you . . . oh, mother ! (*Pressing her breast.*) I feel—I feel so awful as if everybody knew.

Mrs. Gwyn. You think I'm a monster to hurt you. Ah ! yes ! You'll understand better some day.

Joy. (*In a sudden burst of excited fear.*) I won't believe it—I—I—can't—you're deserting me, mother.

Mrs. Gwyn. Oh, you untouched things ! you—(*Joy looks up suddenly, sees her face, and sinks down on her knees.*)

Joy. Mother—It's for me !

Mrs. Gwyn. Ask for my life, Joy—don't be afraid !

(*Joy turns her face away. Mrs. Gwyn bends suddenly and touches her daughter's hair ; Joy shrinks from that touch.*)

(*Recoiling as though she had been stung*) I forgot—I'm deserting you.

(*And swiftly without looking back she goes away. Joy, left alone under the hollow tree crouches lower, and her shoulders shake.*)

A BIT O' LOVE, (1915).

Michael Strangway, gentle and noble, good to all creatures like his exemplar, St. Francis of Assisi, is curate of a village in Devon. A little incident at the opening of the play reveals him. One of the girls who have come to him for the confirmation class, Mercy Jarland, carries with her a caged skylark. Strangway opens the cage, sets free the bird, and asks her never to cage any wild thing.

In the next scene, his wife who has been away with her lover, a doctor, returns and entreats him not to ruin the doctor's career by bringing a divorce. As for returning to her husband it is to her a torture, for she never really loved him, and she tells him that her marriage was a blunder. Her soft love-whispers and passionate kisses were a lie—the thought cuts him like a sharp sword. Grievously abused as he is, in sheer pity and forgiveness he promises her not to launch the suit; his own words to Mercy, "Never cage a wild thing," coming back to his mind with a tragic meaning.

The separation from a wife whom he has loved with adoring devotion brings him a terrible emptiness of heart and despair. No sooner has she left than a villager, named Cremer, inconsolable for the death of his wife, comes to Stangway for a ray of solace. His own bruised heart, needing balm most, he has to minister to a brother's. Putting his hand out, he heartens his stricken brother: "Take hold—hard—harder! I want yours as much as you want mine. Pray for me, Jack and I'll pray for you. And we won't give way, will we?" Cremer goes away consoled in some measure by the strange words.

The news that the curate has promised his wife not to take the law of her lover, spreads in the village, being overheard by Mercy, who has a grudge against him for his having let off her skylark. The villagers are scandalized by what they regard as the curate's impious countenance of immorality. Jarland, the father of Mercy, openly insults Strangway in a public house, calling him a coward and his wife a slut. It is too much for the good curate, though the last is plain language, and he throws the

man. Indignation against the parson reaches a climax, and Strangway, on his way back from the church in the dark night, is hissed and jibed at as a coward "who funk'd the doctor." Meek of heart and crying inwardly for light in his gloom and despair, he tells the threatening Jarland: "It's all over. I'm going—You'll get some one better. Forgive me, Jarland. I can't see your face—it's very dark." But the mocking voices only fling back the line he wrote in his mental darkness: "My heart He lighted not." Starting at the sound of his own words, thus mysteriously given him out of the darkness, Strangway begs them: "Whoever found that, please tear it up! Many of you have been very kind to me. You won't see me again—Good-bye, all!" The shadows return his farewell and give him three mocking cheers.

Shunned by all for his Christian forgiveness, and stifled by the aching void in his heart, he resolves on suicide. He puts his neck into the noose, when a little girl in the barn taking him to be a ghost, for his figure is whitened from head to foot in the moon-light, cries in sheer fright. He takes her up, allays her fear, and cheers her with a bright new shilling. The little girl has re-kindled his love for men. Strangway is revived by the bit o' love, and the mood of suicide has passed away. Cremer, whom he consoled in sorrow, and who has borne up manfully, reminds him of his words: "No Zurr. I'd be killing meself, if I didn't feel I must stick it, like you zaid." The two, made one in sorrow, go out on a long tramp in the moon-light—a moving sight. Strangway, losing his lower, has won the larger love. Lifting up his hands in the gesture of prayer, he cries: God, of the moon and

the Sun ; of joy and beauty and sorrow—Give me strength to go on till I love every living thing !”

The play is the *Paradise Lost and Regained* of a soul ; its theme, the resurrection through sorrow into a larger life—being the same as that of Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*. The play and the poem shadow forth ‘the way of the soul.’ *A Bit O’Love* resembles George Eliot’s *Silas Marner* also in its theme, but, while the regeneration of Silas is effected by means, as beautiful as powerful, the incident that rescues Strangway at the close of the play is tame.

The atmosphere of a Devonshire village and its various types are vividly reproduced. The scene of the village girls dancing in the moon-light is of rare lyric beauty ; the idyll steals into our hearts with a strange gladness. The villagers meeting to pass a resolution disapproving of their curate, in which they are caught up in the vicious circle, that they cannot have a meeting without a chairman, nor a chairman without a meeting, is one of the most humorous scenes in Galsworthy. That solemn ass, Sol Potter, is cousin german to Bully Bottom himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

An Allegorical Dream-Fantasy :

THE LITTLE DREAM (1911).

IT is refreshing to change from these domestic and society plays to *The Little Dream*, redolent of mountain-flowers and medicinal with the healing balm of Nature. In an Alpine *chalet*, we find that the Alpinists, Lamond, from the city, and the grim, solemn-looking, Felsman, native of the mountains, have both enthralled, each in his own manner, the untutored heart of the maiden, Seelchen; they have both kissed her with hungry passion, and sent her to sleep and dream of the fascination exercised by each. Three peaks are looming in the distance, the Cow Horn, the Wine Horn and the Great Horn. The Cow Horn, which symbolizes the spirit of the mountains, is attended by the Flower-Sprites, the grey-white edelweiss, the blue gentian, the yellow mountain-dandelion, and the pink alpenrose, all gemmed with dew-drops that ring like little bells. The Wine Horn is the spirit of the city. Each begins to woo the heart of the beautiful dreamer. "Come to me, I stalk the eternal hills—I drink the mountain snow. My eyes are the colour of burned wine; in them lives melancholy. The lowing of the kine, the wind, the sound of falling rocks, the running of the torrents; no other talk know I. Thoughts simple and blood-hot, strength huge—the cloak of gravity. Live with me under the stars, I shall wake thee with the cry-

stal air," says the Cow Horn. But the Wine Horn on the other hand, beckons her with a youth's voice to the town—to the will-o'-the-wisp that dances through the streets. "I am the cooing dove, from the plane trees' and the chestnuts' shade," he says. "From day to day all changes, where I burn my incense to my thousand little gods. In white palaces I dwell, and passionate dark alleys. The life of men in crowds is mine—of lamplight in the streets at dawn, *(and softly)*, I have a thousand loves, and never one too long; for I am nimbler than your heifers playing in the sunshine. I hear the rustlings of the birth and death of pleasure; and the rattling of swift wheels. I hear the hungry oaths of men; and love-kisses in the airless night. Without *me*, little soul, you starve and die. My thoughts surpass in number the flowers in your meadows; they fly more swiftly than your eagles on the wind. *I drink the wine of aspiration and the drug of disillusion*" Seelchen (the name means the 'little soul') is tantalized, being magnetically drawn towards both. The flowers that are jealous of the Wine Horn lure her to their perfume, their softness, and their sumptuous array. In heated rivalry, the Cow Horn gives her certainty, peace, stillness, and one love; the Wine Horn, chance, change, voice, and many loves. To Seelchen, thus torn between the two-fold call of society and solitude, of work and peace, of contentment and aspiration, of the One and the Many, The Great Horn—the mountain of final Mystery and Providence—lifts up its heartening voice: "And both shalt thou love, little soul! Thou shalt lie on the hills with Silence; and dance in the cities with Knowledge. Both shall possess thee! The Sun and the moon on the mountains shall burn thee; the lamps of the Town singe thy wings, small Moth!

Each shall seem all the world to thee, each shall seem as thy grave ! Thy heart is a feather blown from one mouth to the other. But be not afraid ! For the life of a man is for all loves in turn. 'Tis a little craft moored, then sailing out into the blue ; a tune caught in a hush, then whispering on ; a new-born babe, half courage and half sleep. There is a hidden rhythm. Change, quietude. Chance, certainty. The one, the many. Burn on—thou pretty flame, trying to eat the world ! Thou shalt come to me at last, my little Soul !” Enraptured, Seelchen stretches her arms to embrace the sight and sound, but all fades slowly into dark sleep ; but she continues to dream on. Decoyed by the bewitching tunes of the mandolin struck by the youth of the Wine Horn, and the dance of fire-fly lights and moth-children, fluttering and wheeling a thousand ways before her, she wanders with Lamond through the city, chasing its butterfly pleasures that are here, there, and nowhere. The city’s joys, so many and kaleidoscopic, are so subtly evasive, so fugitive, that she has turned pale and *blasé* with the quest. But Lamond inspirits her : “ Child ! To love is to live—seeking for wonder. When a feather flies, is it not loving the wind unknown ? If darkness and light did not change, could we breathe ? ”

And he tells her how Joy resides only in the excitement of the game, in ever chasing and never attaining the phantom that entices and eludes us for ever : “ To love is to peer over the edge, and, spying the little grey flower, to climb down ! It has flown—again you must climb ; it shivers, ’tis but air in your hand—you must crawl, you must cling, you must leap, and still it is there and not there—for the

grey flower flits like a moth, and the wind of its wings is all you shall catch. But your eyes shall be shining, your cheeks shall be burning, your breast shall be panting.—Ah! little heart! (*The scene falls darker*) And when the night comes—there it is still, thistle-down blown on the dark, and your white hands will reach for it, and your honey breath waft it, and never, never, shall you grasp it—but life shall be lovely. (*His voice dies to a whisper. He stretches out his arms*) Come to my Town!—Come!”

Just then, echoing Lamond’s thought, the Youth of the Wine Horn sings seductively :

“The windy hours through darkness fly—
Canst hear them, little heart?
New loves are born, and old loves die,
And kissing lips must part.
The dusky bees of passing years—
Canst see them, soul of mine—
From flower and flower supping tears,
And pale sweet honey wine?”

Seelchen abandons Lamond and the Wine Horn, cloyed with the city and wan with its pleasures, and now eager for Felsman and the Cow Horn. The mountains do not still her craving either. Oaten pipe and floral dance, sylvan song and Arcadian rest, only bring on unspeakable ennui and somnolent lethargy. Jaded by the city, and palled by the hills, Seelchen glimpses in the distance the immense form of Great Horn towering aloft, whose accents, strong and clear, ring out once again in the dawning light.

“Wandering flame, thou restless fever,
Burning all things, regretting none;
The winds of fate are stilled for ever—
Thy little generous life is done,

And all its wistful wanderings cease !
 Thou traveller to the tideless sea,
 Where light and dark, change and peace,
 Are One—come, little soul, to Mystery !

Rising to her knees, and stretching out her hands
 with ecstasy, Seelchen cries : "Great one, I come".
 Waking, she looks around, struggles to her feet ;
 and exclaims in dismay : "My little dream !"

The lyrics of this drama are of haunting beauty ;
 the second stanza of the Youth of the Wine Horn's
 song is even finer than the first, which we have
 already quoted :

" O flame that treads the marsh of time,
 Flitting for ever low,
 Where, through the black enchanted slime,
 We desperate, following go—
 Untimely fire, we bid thee stay !
 Into dark air above,
 'The golden gipsy thins away—
 So has it been with love !"

CHAPTER. IX.

Characteristics

Materials and Methods—The border-land of tragedy and comedy—Illumination of hidden depths of suffering—of the surd of character—and of the springs of action--Range and variety of characterisation--The Galsworthy types—Limitations of creative power--‘The surface-method of psychology’--The art of construction—Sex-interest, either absent or subordinated—Variety in construction—Surprise and Mystery—Their inevitability--Tragic irony—Humour—Foreign affinities—The plays, a mirror of contemporary England—Optimism—The dramatist, *avvates sacer* ; A supreme artist and teacher.

A DRAMATIST may think of a story first and then of the characters who are to fill it; or, he may devise a story for characters whom he has already conceived and are live in his mind ; or again, starting merely with a dominant idea or purpose, he may seek to express it through story and character designed *ad hoc*. Galsworthy, like Shakespeare, begins generally with the story ; most of his plays being the efflorescence of some incident or situation pregnant with significance, on which he has pondered deep. Far from sporadic or exceptional, these incidents are common everyday occurrence. Ordinary cases of theft and defamation, the forging of a cheque, an illicit amour between the young hopeful of a family and the housemaid, a wife’s infidelity to or revolt from her husband, a quarrel between mother and daughter or some other rift in the domestic lute, a case of business jobbery, a newspaper canard—what could be more

unpromising as themes for serious drama? And yet, so informed with character and meaning, and of such breathless interest from start to finish are these plays that it needs critical effort on our part to divest them of flesh and blood, and penetrate to their inner anatomy—to realise how the bones of bald incidents have been kindled by a Promethean spark. There are, however, some plays, like *Loyalties*, *The Skin Game*, *A Family Man*, *The Forest*, of which the characters and story must have flashed at once white-hot in Galsworthy's imagination; while in a couple of plays, *The Pigeon* and *Old English*, he has thought of the characters first and situation afterwards. Such a classification of the plays enables us not only to orient Galsworthy's dramatic genius, but also realize how he must have brooded with painful intensity on the tragedy and pathos of life, its many ironies and avoidable sufferings, even more than he has contemplated puzzling, if not also disheartening, paradoxes of character.

Profound reflections on the tangled skein of life, many of his plays are refractory to orthodox divisions of comedy and tragedy; not so much because they are chequered with joy and sorrow, as because their situations are of a twilight nature, partaking of the character of both; or, to change the metaphor, the incidents are like the tear-fringed lashes of a bright evening cloud. *The Pigeon*, *A Family Man*, *Windows*, *The Eldest Son*, *The Forest*, *Old English*, *The Silver Box*, *Strife*, *A Bit C'Love*, and even *Joy* and *Foundations* (which are strictly comedies), lie on the border-land, between tragedy and comedy. The rest are tragedies revealing not so much the pitiful estate of humanity as those evils that are remediable by human endeav-

our, knowledge, and sympathy. They are not tragedies in the Hardyian sense—pictures of utterly unmerited suffering, with the mocking laughter of Gods in the background. Their author, having plunged as it were into the Cave of Trophonius, has emerged, not pale and spectral, but filled with hope, though mingled with pity and sadness.

His dramas lift the veil from off abysses of suffering hidden away in dark corners of society—of people who have gone under in the struggle of life ; whose days are a perpetual gloom ; who, toiling without hope, sink every day deeper and deeper, sometimes through weakness of character, but more often, through the callousness of the rich, and the mute cruelty of institutions. These sufferers have names in the plays, but in life they belong to a nameless host that are dealt with in the lump by blue books. It is from such an anonymous throng that Galsworthy has called to life characters like Ruth, Freda, Falder, Chloe, the Jones, the Blys, the Roberts, and the Lemmys. Which of his characters is livider and more interesting than Faith, who is lured by her passionate and sensuous nature into a sip of poisonous pleasure, kills her baby in a delirious fit, expiates her "crime" in the prison for three years, and is released only to find that she has to buffet with the world for very life. With difficulty she gets a foothold, only to be pitched off it for a moment's response to a young man's sympathy and love. Proud, impulsive, and romantic, she would have, but for the providential appearance of a police man, fallen into the hands of the nearest villain. Then she quits the Marches, and swells, in all conscience, the ranks of the *demi monde*. More harrowing is the

fate of Falder, who, when he is about to settle again after two years of sheer agony, finds the law ruthlessly seizing him, all on a sudden, to snatch him back to his cell,—a fate from which he extricates himself by dashing his life out on the stairs. And what a fate is that of Ruth, the creature he sought to rescue from her ogreish husband! During the two years when Falder is in prison she takes to shirt-making, and waits for his return with deferred hope. Unable to support her children on starvation wages and unwilling to see them die, she forswears love and honour and succumbs to temptation. The reader remembers again Annie Roberts sinking for want of coal, and the pitiable story of Mrs. Lemmy and her children. The fates of these may give us a nightmare; but they *are* there—unsightly gangrenes in modern life and civilisation. They need not be however, if only men would *will*! Herein lies a main difference between Galsworthian and Shakespearian trag-dy. In the former, the tragic stress is less on fate and the dark powers that man the soul; the evil springs more from things under, than from those beyond man's control.

But the other aspects of tragedy, on which Shakespeare lays such awful emphasis, are not missed in Galsworthian tragedy: that the protagonist is often faced by a hopeless dilemma—presented with a choice that is impossible; that man's tenure on earth is precarious; that his weaknesses often let loose hell; that he suffers out of all proportion to what he does and is; and worse, that men often suffer as much for their virtues as for their vices. Captain Dancy, for the moment an energumens of a dark impulse, egged on by misguided reasoning and blinded by race-

hatred, plunges into the crime. As he would dispel his wife's suspicions and hide from her his past irregularities, he takes the initiative in the legal action, confesses his crime and his folly to her after he is convicted, and resorts to self-violence to escape arrest. Could he not have made the same confession to his wife before, and be forgiven by her with the same generous love? There was no blot on his scutcheon till he committed the theft. Having done it he is simply unable to see its criminal character. Can self-delusion be more tragic? That is why he pens an apology and asks De Levis to sign it. Cynical audacity cannot go further; and yet, this man with his unimpeachable past is unable to see the enormity of it. It is a blind fury that has seized and dragged him into the gulf. He was not himself when he made the leap; it was with him then a sort of intoxication. Demanding, as it did, greater nerve than anything he had done in the war, he felt it to be the biggest adventure of his life. Therein lies the tragedy of character. Dancy could help himself no more than Faith Bly, or Ferrand, or Mrs. Megan, could help themselves. When we close *Loyalties*, it is sheer pity that we feel for the lost, war-retuned soldier—a pity that makes his crime a lesser thing. Our instincts are stronger than our will, and yet we have to subdue them—therein lies the surd of character, as Bly, the window-cleaner has realized in all its grim import. Galsworthy puts the same sad truth in the mouth of Ferrand: "The good God made me so that I would rather walk a whole month of nights, hungry, with the stars, than sit one single day making round business on an office stool! *"It is stronger than me."* The Italics are

ours.) The last sentence is later repeated by Wellwyn, who feels his charitable instincts stronger than him.

This might seem to take us to the verge of ethical determinism, which no great interpreter of life has ever held. No more does Galsworthy countenance such a doctrine than Shakespeare, who depicts Othello as a man suddenly possessed, or Macbeth hurried with fearful speed into crime. To blink away, or to blench before the awful facts of life is not the way to solve them. It is well to recognize, seeing how a full knowledge of the enemy's strength is indispensable for any victory, the hidden demonic forces in our nature, which leap up at moments from their lair and hold us in their grip; and no less well to recognize the existence of characters like Heythorp, Bastable, Ferrand, Mrs. Megan, and Dawker, who will ever remain to us insolvable human puzzles. We are, however, abstracting one aspect of life as presented in these plays. For, if there are, lying deep in human nature, incalculable forces of evil, there are in it also, as philosophers like William James tell us, undreamt-of springs of goodness, which start up from their sleep in 'the subliminal' to succour a man in crises.

Of more practical value than the revelation by these plays of the tragedy of life and character is their illumination of the springs of conduct. Let us take, for instance, Chloe's concealment of her past from her husband. We have seen how that was the only way in which she could have sloughed away her past—her only door to a new life, to virtue, and to what she prized most, Charlie's love. "When I deceived him I'd have deceived God himself," she cries piteously. That one

scene clarifies our understanding and enlarges our charity more than volumes of psychological and ethical disquisition; it is a piece of astonishing insight. Not less profound in divination is the laying bare of the motives that precipitate Dancy into crime. Falder's consuming eagerness to save Ruth, which drives him to forgery and spells his terrible fate, gives us the same pause. Scenes like these in Galsworthy take us to the very depths.

The plays exhibit an extraordinary range and variety of characters, representing all sorts and conditions of English life: manufacturers and financiers, capitalists and industrial directors, lawyers and magistrates, politicians and authors, aristocrats and middle-class townsmen, labourers and soldiers, policemen and gaol-governors, waiters, parlour-maids and charwomen. Thorough-paced villains are rare in Galsworthy, while grotesque, abnormal and 'humorous' characters are almost absent, caricature being scrupulously avoided. Measure and truth are the basic principles that govern his character-drawing, insomuch an actor must find that the maintenance of perfect balance between the extremes of under- and over-acting is like skating on thin ice.

The Galsworthy characters, though they are finely distinguished—no two of them being exactly alike—are easily classifiable into well-marked types. There are the gentle, noble, and kind-hearted characters: Wellwyn, Strangway, Cokeson, Col. Hope, March, Hillcrist, Edgar, Walter How, and Lord Dromondy. Then, there are the idealists: Roberts, Malise, Frome, More, John March. And the Forsyte and Pendyce types: Barthwick, Builder, Lever, George and Sir Charles Dedmond, and Sir William

Cheshire. A class by themselves are the respectable rascals, Heythorp and Bastable. We come across in many plays one or other of Galsworthy's suffering and loyal women, patient and loving: Jones, Annie Roberts, Clare, Faith, Mabel, and Chloe. Contrasted with them are the decisive middle-class women: Mrs. Hillerist, Mrs. Barthwick, Mrs. March, and Lady Cheshire. Contrasted with these again, are the kindly, indecisive husbands: Hillerist, March. The sprightly girls, Dot and Joy, are a delightful pair; and still more so are the bewitching Olive and Little Anne. The faithful secretaries, Steel, Farney, and Farrel, are colourless; and so are the young soldiers, unintellectual and commonplace—Huntingdon, Hubert Julian, Major Colford—General Canynge standing apart by his truth and honour.

While almost all Galsworthy's characters are convincing, some of them full of life, we feel that many lack a certain vitality and solidity; they do not become intimate to us like the great creations of Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens. What do we know, for instance, of Anthony, except that he embodies a certain conviction? Of Stephen More, except that he incarnates an ideal? Of Bastable, except that he is a financiering monster, who atones for his sins by increasing his charities and compensating his tool of a secretary? Of George Dedmond, except that he is a smug, paste-board society man? or of Malise, save that he is a champion of noble causes and a hater of all that Dedmond stands for? The question might be multiplied with reference to several other characters without our being able to answer it favourably to the author. We feel that

Galsworthy's highest genius does not lie in vitalizing character.

Nor can we place him—*pace* André Chevrillon—admit the greatest masters of psychology, though often, as in the case of Chloe, he penetrates by a sudden intuition into the dim recesses of personality, “where the hunted soul stands at bay.” With all his wonderful achievement in *Old English* and *The Forest*, we feel a certain lack in these plays. What would not Meredith have made of such characters as Heythorp and Bastable! Galsworthy's defects in this respect arises out of his very strength—from what we may call, the “surface-method of revealing psychology.” Minute and trivial external phenomena are made the mirrors of subtle inner movements. The reader will remember in *A Family Man* the fleeting glance that Camille casts at Builder as she goes out; Builder's scrutinizing of himself in the glass over the hearth; his dropping the gaze as his eyes catch hers. Later, their hands touch, and his eyes rest on hers attracted, but resentful; and further on, their fingers-touch again, and there is a suspicion of encounter between their eyes. As she goes out, he suddenly turns towards his chair, and compressing his lips, settles into it. Then, as he sees Maud advancing to him, he cries “Hallo, Maud!” and begins to read his papers seriously. What could be more expressive of the thoughts and fancies, the sudden summoning of the will, and the quick eagerness to keep up seriousness before his daughter? Then again, Maud's desperate typing, expresses her inner disturbance more eloquently than words. The best touch comes perhaps at the close. No words could bring out more vividly Mrs. Builder's eagerness not to make a point

of her victory, her love and quiet solicitude for her husband, and almost maternal tenderness towards the deserted man, than her movements indicated in the stage direction; nothing can be more delicately beautiful, more forgiving, or more charitable: "She moves slowly to the table, and stands looking at him. Then going up to the curtains she mechanically adjusts them, and still keeping her eyes on Builder, comes down to the table and pours out his usual glass of whisky toddy." It is the finest appeal that any wife could make to her husband to forget the past; and how true to life! "Builder who has become conscious of her presence, turns in his chair as she hands it to him; he sits a moment motionless, then squeezes her hand." Can gratitude and the return of love be expressed better? Examples of this art could be given from every one of Galsworthy's plays. The Choice scenes in *The Skin Game* are full of even profounder indications. With all this, we cannot place Galsworthy as a psychologist on the same level as Meredith, George Eliot, or Ibsen.

In the art of construction, however, Galsworthy stands unsurpassed in modern drama. The exposition in every play, while apprising us of the initial situation and foreshadowing the nature of the complication that is to begin, interests us at once. The interest, thus roused, is never allowed to flag. Every scene follows naturally and inevitably. In *The Fugitive*, Clare's coming back to Malise gives us a gleam of hope that she will yet be happy; and when she arrives at the hotel we are so curious to know why she has come there, and how she has changed, and what she is going to do, of all places, *there!* In *The Eldest Son*, our knowledge that Bill is in the same predicament

as Dunning makes us eager to know how Sir William would act under the same circumstances; though we foresee how it will end, the upshot is uncertain, as Bill is resolved to be just to the woman. In *Justice*, the scene in the law-court raises our hopes for Falder; those of the prison lift the veil on his misery, and rouse our pity to such a point that we long to see him released; and when we just begin to heave a sigh of relief at the possibility of his being reinstated in his old place, James How imposes on him a condition that takes away the blessing. However, the obstacle vanishes when Cokeson hints the impossibility of the divorce, and we think that there is still hope for Falder, when the policeman appears on the scene, and the sky is at once darkened. In *The Pigeon* we wish at every stage that Wellwyn would sometime or other turn his back at the ragamuffins, but no, his goodness continues unconquered to the last. In *Strife*, the determined attitudes of Anthony and Roberts keeps us throughout in suspense. In *Joy*, while the opposed temperaments and outlook of mother and daughter bring their relations to a distressing dead-lock, making us expect an unhappy end, the happy conclusion more natural than the other, steals on us with a surprise. In *The Silver Box*, Barthwick's discovering that his own son stands in a like situation with Jones makes us expect him to drop the prosecution, but he goes ahead, prompted by his deep-rooted sense of property until we come to the pathetic end. *The Little Dream* keeps us oscillating between the Cow Horn and the Wine Horn and we wonder whom Seelchen will choose, when the higher voice of the Great Horn is heard. In *A Bit O' Love* we apprehend a tragedy, but hidden spiritual depths in Strangway save him at last from

suicide. *The Foundations* conceals the mystery of the bomb from the beginning, and our fear for Lemmy never leaves us until we come to know at the end that it is a huge joke. In *The Skin Game* the exciting action scene; the secret about Chloe; her curious behaviour before Dawker, Charlie and his father; the latter's learning the past of Chloe; the foul play of Mrs. Hillerist—for such it appears to Hornblower—and his rushing to her to exact forfeiture; his coming to know about the way in which the secret leaked out; our last hope for Chloe, coming from Hillerist and Jill, with their fruitless plans to save her; Charlie's getting to know the secret;—every link in the chain is of the utmost interest. *Loyalties*, which also contains a mystery, makes us expect the case to turn against De Levis, though we have a vague feeling from the first that he is right in his suspicions. The proofs of Dancy's guilt coming from a strange, but still, most natural, quarter; our feeling of relief when we know that he has yet a door of escape; the pathetic scene of his wife's love and loyalty; and the crowning surprise of Dancy's suicide—keep our minds in taut suspense. In *The Windows*, the impasse between mother and son is followed by a double surprise. A *Family Man* is no less splendidly constructed. The scene between Maud and Builder; the parenthetical love-passage between Builder and Camille; the scene in the Mayor's Court; the series of incidents that follow—the paper-seller and the hooting boy, the daughters' home-coming, Builder's summary ejection of them, his foiled attempt to console himself with Camille, his venting the temper on the editor, the reinforced appearance of the mocking urchins, and last, the most delightful surprise of all, the return of the pardoning wife—every scene is

telling, and in place. *The Forest* has several strands of interest: the inscrutable character of Bastaple and his machinations, the romantic story of Amina, Herrick, and Strood, and Bastaple's fraudulent escape from impending financial crash.

Galsworthy's situations are all original and fresh, drawn from first-hand experience and observation, and developed with wonderful art. The way in which they sustain interest is all the more astonishing when we remember that sex-interest is absent from most of them, and play but a very minor and incidental part in others. From *The Silver Box*, *Strife*, *The Pigeons*, *Loyalties*, *The Foundations*, and *The Mob*, it is absent; and in the rest it occupies a corner—though an interesting one.

The plays exhibit all possible variety in construction. Some of the most interesting of them finish with their crisis at the beginning; and some, like *The Pigeons* and *The Foundations*, have no crisis; in others, like *Loyalties* and *Old English*, the crisis merges in the catastrophe. *The Skin Game*, *Windows*, and *The Fugitive* have a double crisis. In this last play as well as in *A Family Man* (in the case of Buiders' wife and daughters), *Loyalties* and *Justice*, the internal conflict lies outside the play.

In some, there is, as we have mentioned already, an element of mystery, and in others, of surprise. These scenes that defeat our expectations are most natural, being the outcome of vital experience. Take, for instance, *The Windows*; who could have anticipated its conclusion? And yet, the thing that happens is truer than anything we could have fancied or forecast. Inevitability is the keynote of these surprises. Secrets like that of Chloë long remain hidden

in life, and are discovered—if discovered they are only by the irony and mischance of fate. Family feuds always end in some of the skeletons on the cupboards, of one or the other family, or of both, being ultimately exposed.

The reader is already familiar with the best scenes in these plays. Some of them abound in 'Sophoclean Irony' instances of which we have noted in their place. Strangway's 'Cage no wild thing,' which comes home to him later with an ominous meaning, when his wife has abandoned him, and his words to Cremer, who comes to him for strength: "Some lose their wives for ever,"—which has one meaning to himself and another to Cremer—might be recalled. *The Skin Game* affords many examples. Hillcrest is in exultation over his victory when he learns that it is Hornblower that has finally won; the next day it turns out it is not he, but the other. We have an instance again where Charlie enters with possession of the secret just when his father has sealed up the agreement with Mrs. Hillcrest; and still another, in *Joy* where Col. Hope unburdens himself of his troubled solicitude for his niece with garrulous irrelevance.

Galsworthy's best humour is ironic, which, though often kindly and sometimes sad, is more often caustic. The humorous scenes of *The Pigeon* illustrate the mellower variety; those of *A Family Man* are sharper, for the trouncing of Builder is done with infinite gusto, Galsworthy being delightfully wicked in the play. In his gayest manner is the village meeting (in *A Bit O' Love*) which recalls Shakespeare at his best. Endowed with a French

sense of form, Galsworthy has also the French irony though without its hilarity.

The foreign affinities of Galsworthy are best summarized in the words of Sheila Kaye-smith. "Galsworthy has that infinite pity, almost reverence, for suffering which characterizes Russian ideas. But the same pity and reverence are not expressed in the large, straightforward manner of Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, but with Gallic subtlety and irony, recalling Flaubert. The writer with whom he has greatest affinity, to whom he may be said to be to a certain extent indebted, is Turguenev. In Turguenev we see the meeting ground of French and Russian art. There is the breadth, the tenderness, the mysticism of the Slav, mingling with the Frenchman's sense of humour and sense of form. Galsworthy has few, if any, English affinities. But, on the other hand, he has anglicised the foreign influences. The Russian pity is shorn of its mysticism, the French irony of its gaiety. These two combinations are characteristic of the countries of their origin, and Galsworthy splits them, choosing the pity and the irony, leaving the mysticism and the gaiety—thus asserting both his personality and his race."

As we read these plays the scenes of contemporary England pass panoramaically before our eyes. We discern the genius of the soil—the very stuff of the people. We see the homes of comfort and luxury, of joy, innocence, and love, as well as the chambers of toil, starvation, and despair. We alternate between the bustling beehive of the city and the calm leisureliness of the country. We brush shoulders with racing oracles in Jockey clubs, and catch a glimpse of *roués* haunting hotels like 'The

Gascony, ' where the dazzling light and the riotous laughter of supper parties arrest us a moment. Disgusted we leave the city for the country—say, a Devonshire village—and behold with rapture joyous lads and lasses in the barn, dancing in the moonlight to the merry tambourine. We wake up on the morrow and enjoy perhaps a hearty laugh at the solemn absurdities of loutish farmers meeting at the village inn. We do not enjoy it long, either, for we soon tire of the stupidity and ignorance of Little Peddlington.

The young man returns from the front, ardent with high ideals; the visionary writer slaves for his bread; the doctrinaire philanthropist tries in vain to stem the tide of pauperism and unemployment with his theories. We hear the voices of sweated workers and the echoes of socialism—the hope of the poor. We come across jeering street urchins, up for any sport, and on the look-out for possible victims. Abandoned characters in the streets strip the good man of his last shilling. The policeman stands at the corner, courteous, ever ready to help, and true to his duty. We pass on, and shake hands with politicians of all complexion, radicals, liberals, and conservatives—incere, compromising, or hollow. We hear the fox-hunting aristocrat sagely advising his son: "My family goes back to the thirteenth century... plenty of time to work up the constituency before we kick out these infernal Rads;" or a Barthwick confiding to his wife: "If only the poorer classes would trust us—" We part from them also, and greet the lawyers; perhaps, it is Twisden (of *Loyalties*), filled with the dignity and sacredness of the law; but more commonly it is men of the stamp of Roper, who think of conscience as an impediment in the legal profes-

sion. Then we stumble on manufacturers, aggressively prosperous, ever on the stretch to expand their industries; and capitalists whose sympathies for labourers could be evoked only by the prospect of falling dividends. We come across, sons of the wealthy, sowing wild oats, and meeting paternal reprimands with insolence. We meet serious matrons, skilled in domestic economy, loving and considerate, or proud and overbearing; gay society women, like Miss Orme, and shop-girls with cigarette boxes in their hands; budding "film stars" like Maud Builder; courtesans rouged and powdered; sparkish house-maids. We feel the quiet happiness of the fireside, and the love that wraps parents and children, brothers and sisters, like a warm garment. As we read on, we are touched by the wild pulsating life of a nation, astir with thought, and multitudinous conflicts in temperaments and ideas; we see England in our mind—the wealth, the peace, the joy, the squalor, and the struggle.

We see, too, something deeper than them all—the discord between fathers and children, husbands and wives, rich and poor, the rivalries between families, the inborn repugnance for alien and coloured races; the reigning cant and hypocrisy; the sickening compromises and the falsity of professed political ideals. Galsworthy sees them all with the vision of a *vates sacer*. He spots the malady, suggests the cure, and points the warning finger though he has no nostrums for special social diseases. He does not despair though his tones are sad—if he did, he would have spared us his plays. No, he has gazed at the Gorgon without turning to stone, for he is one of those who never doubt that "clouds would break, never dream that, though right were worsted, wrong would

triumph." Else were all his moral fervour wasted. A noble teacher, whose voice, though now a cry in the wilderness, will one day be heard! His highest gospel is love—love to all living creatures. The prayer of Strangway in *A Bit O' Love* is the same that wells up from this great artist and thinker, who clears our eyes and lifts our hearts.

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